COMIXSCENE

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BIG SHAZAM ISSUE!

A SUPERGRAPHICS PUBLICATION

COMIXSCENE

JAN–FEB 1973 No. 2

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and the brotherhood of comic artists and writers.

EDITORIAL

It looks as though this month is going to be a milestone in comic history—Captain Marvel lives again and the second issue of *COMIXSCENE* is published right on schedule. All the more appropriate that this issue should be devoted to the "big red cheese."

Looking back, it's been an interesting year with new titles such as *Tarzan, Korak, Luke Cage, Ghost Rider, Kamandi, The Demon, Werewolf By Night, Man-Thing* and *Swamp Thing* rushing in to compete for newsstand space while other titles proliferated, petered out, or passed away.

We had the pleasure of appearing this year as guest of honor and exhibiting paintings and pages at Canada's Cosmicon, New York's July Comic Art Convention, Boston's Newcon, Detroit's Triple Fan Fair, and back to New York for Creation. It's always a pleasure to greet old friends and rap with fans about the comix scene.

But the big event this year as far as we are concerned was the publication of Volume Two of *The History Of Comics*, and our hope that it will shape and temper the comic image for generations yet to come. With the completion of Volume Two, time and energy can be focused on new areas, and allow the development of this publication and others like the *Encyclopedia of Super Heroes* (due for publication early in 1973).

It was also the year we moved into a new building, with space to house the Supergraphics operation, its staff and offices. The move was still another way of underscoring our determination to produce quality material devoted to visual storytelling and popular media.

As we said before, it's been a good year.

A flood of mail arrived in the wake of the premier issue of *COMIXSCENE*. Needless to say, we were more than gratified that so many of you took the time to express your opinions and make suggestions about our new publication. Almost to a man, your response reiterated my opening editorial that the time had come for a high quality, well written newspaper directed dead center at the comics media, one which did away completely with opinion, speculation, rumor and nonsense which makes up 90% of most 'zines.

Some letters expressed a doubt about our maintaining a steady frequency of six issues a year. I know only too well that it is possible to miss a deadline. But as far as *COMIXSCENE* is concerned, we have taken steps in our production procedure to meet and hold our bi-monthly schedule. For example, future issues are planned in advance, and assignments for feature material are given months ahead of deadline. As soon as one issue is off the drawing boards, the next is put into production. To sum up, we promise to do our best for our readers.

Admittedly some of our news was dated—an almost necessary first-issue flaw which you will see rectified immediately. As we've said before, we are dedicated to presenting ALL the news as clearly as possible. Our sources are the writers, artists, editors and publishers of the comic world—the people who make the news. You'll read it here first.

Somehow, one questionable item managed to slip through last issue. We reported National editor Joe Orlando would be working on a new *Tales From The Crypt* magazine in the near future. Not true, claims Orlando, who has since then received threatening letters against his life should he change a line on any of the old EC material. We stand corrected (though one of your writers gave us the item, Joe). It's always a pleasure to save the life of a friend—even if he is an editor!

Several letters commented on the heavy "sell" for Supergraphics products in the pages of *COMIXSCENE*. Right you are! My long editorial was an answer to the question most frequently asked—"What are you doing these days?"

Much of my time is being spent now working on books and projects created specifically for the comics fan. Making this kind of decision can be an expensive committment in time, energy, and finances. Such a commitment demands maximum promotion if it is to continue, especially at the level projected.

The situation is simple: without your support there would be no Supergraphics products. Yet even with the number of advertisements in *COMIXSCENE*, we still feel that considering the page size, the extra color, the best typeography, the quality of the research and writing, and the graphics, that page for page *COMIXSCENE* gives its readers MORE FOR THEIR MONEY than any publication of its kind in the field. If you don't believe it, just look around.

You'll note, however, that we'll continue to recommend other 'zines in our pages. Our policy is dedicated to expanding fandom and lending a helping hand whenever we can. Any worthwhile and reputable product or publication (even if it is in competition) gets our full support.

Another point that comes to mind is the type of graphic material in *COMIXSCENE*. Several readers felt it was "loaded" with too many of my own illustrations. For the most part, it was a matter of necessity. Future issues will, of course, feature the most exciting professional art work available. Tell us who and what you'd like to see on our pages and we'll do our best to comply. We'll wait to hear from you.

WHAT EVIL LURKS IN THE HEARTS OF MEN DEPT: I've been asked about this so often in the past few months, that it might well be said here. Back in September 1971, I had heard that National was preparing to pick up The Shadow series for comic book publication. Because the character was (and is) one of my favorites, I dropped publisher Carmine Infantino a note listing my qualifications—over 250 of the 325 pulps in my collection, a thorough knowledge of the character and his premise, a long personal friendship with Walter Gibson and Bruce Elliott (better known as Maxwell Grant).

Carmine responded by saying they were doubtful they could get the series. Marvel was opting for the rights also and even went so far as to announce Conway and Ploog collaborating on the strip. Stan and I discussed it, but it was his intention that The Shadow become a kind of present-day story narrator instead of a 30's-type crimebuster.

In April, National discovered they had a previous option on the property; Denny O'Neil was chosen as editor, Len Wein was to script. No artist was scheduled yet. I talked to Denny about picking up the assignment—writing and illustrating. He said Len's committment was non-negotiable. *I felt that I could only do my best work on the strip if I* was able to both write and draw it as I had with SHIELD. I dropped out.

Six months later, no script had been written yet, but it had been plotted. The opening scene took place at a charity auction-ball (how mysterious!?) and went downhill from there as The Shadow used his powers to stop a tyrant from blackmailing a foreign country with a plague serum. All the elements that made The Shadow pulp formula were missing. After discussing the discrepancies with Len, the story was re-plotted and Wrightson's presentation piece showed up.

Simultaneously, I discussed the possibility of collaborating with Len and Denny on the script. Len insisted on writing, Denny insisted on plotting. I turned in a presentation on the slim hope I could help develop the story. Suddenly I had the job, but no script. Weeks went by. Then a script written by Denny materialized—with a note that said, "Time's a' wastin'!" What the . . .

I called Denny, asking about my deadline. Another month went by, no answer. About this time Alex Toth was given the job. Good man, Toth! He'd turn in a terrific story. Instead, he rewrote the script and turned in a bill for it, a move which justified my own feelings. Suddenly, I had the job again.

I agreed to re-read the old script and see what I could do with it. Denny's breakdowns were completely at odds with my style of storytelling, and as editor, he refused my request to script any future Shadow tales because he didn't like my writing. I considered the script at hand and realized to accept would have meant turning in an inferior story due to the clash of storytelling styles. To do so would mean cheating myself, O'Neil, Infantino and most importantly the readers. Again, I decided to bow out. The script continues to bounce around like a tennis ball—at the moment, Kaluta has it—but as the voice says . . . "WHO KNOWS . . ?"

If you find yourself rambling through downtown Manhattan, make it a point to visit a pair of little shops packed with comics and rare related material. In the West side: The Village Comic Book Store at 6 Morton Street; in the East side. Memories, Inc. at 15 3rd Avenue. Both places have a stockpile of interesting stuff, and you'll enjoy rapping with Dave and Chuck.

Those of you who haven't subscribed are taking the risk of missing some sensational issues coming in the near future. *COMIXSCENE* 3 will be a big ALL-HORROR ISSUE packed with a coffinful of spine-tingling graphics and surprises. Comics, films, paperbacks, undergrounds, and pulps will be featured in the Supergraphics style. In the planning stages, a special issue which will run my anti-drug comic, THE BLOCK, and perhaps a definitive checklist of all my books, paintings, stories and covers.

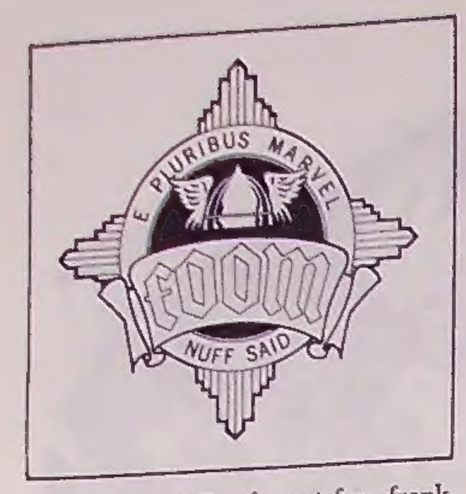
That's it for another issue but before we go, all the staff of COMIXSCENE wish you the very best for the coming holiday season! 'Til next *time, take care.* *Steranko*

WRITERS WANTED!!

We need writers who specialize in articles about Marvel Comics and their characters. If you've authored fanzine articles about Marvel material, send us copies for possible republication. Or, if you have an idea for an article, drop us a line along with a sample of your writing style. Mail your stuff to;

SUPERGRAPHICS
MARVEL MATERIAL
BOX 445
WYOMISSING, PA. 19610

This issue dedicated to a good friend and a great writer
OTTO BINDER



Face Front! For far-out fun, frank friendliness and frivolous fantasy, follow FOOM's freewheeling, frolicsome fickle finger of fortune! Firmly flaunt the flourishing flag of FOOM! Find fabulous fan fulfillment in the frothy, freaky fraternal force of FOOM!!!

You better believe it—Friends Of Ol' Marvel is here!

Stan Lee and Marvel Comics are about to institute a new Marvel Fan Club – *FOOM* – an abbreviation of *Friends Of Ol' Marvel*!

After months of planning, the far-flung Fellowship of FOOM will be making its grand debut with a full-page announcement in the February Marvel comics. With Stan Lee at the helm of this new organization, the Friends Of Ol' Marvel will again have their own club around which to rally.

To get the new organization off the ground, Stan and Mighty Marvel have assembled the biggest membership kit ever offered to fans since the days of radio premiums. Packed with color, graphics and fun, this membership package promises to be one of the collectors' items of the decade. It will be available by subscription only and will not be sold in stores.

Among the items included in this kit is a *giant* 22" by 28" *poster* in full color, featuring Mr. Fantastic, The Hulk, The Thing, Daredevil, The Black Widow, The Human Torch, Black Bolt and others.

Besides the poster, each FOOM club subscriber will receive a *special gold-finished membership card*. The FOOM symbol is emblazoned on one side of the card, while the club pledge appears on the other. Stan wrote the copy for this and every other item in the kit in his own special style –you'll know what we mean when you see it.

Four FOOM *day-glo stickers* are also included, each with a different design, shape, size and color so that they may be applied anywhere.

The real surprise of the membership kit, however, is a full year's subscription to the *FOOM MAGAZINE*. This combination newsletter–fanzine will feature all the current and upcoming news of the Marvel Comics Group. Dozens of covers will be reproduced, months ahead of time. Articles, biographies, games and contests will all be featured in this 32-page book, keeping members informed and enlightened on the manner of Marvel. Published four times a year, *FOOM MAGAZINE* promises to be a breakthrough as far as fan clubs go, and is worth the price of the kit alone.

The entire membership kit comes in a highly unusual, eyepopping envelope that only Marvel could produce.

Stan's decision to create a new Marvel club at this time was not made in haste. Previous organizations had been somewhat less than successful because of Stan's commitments to writing and editing, leaving little time for participation in fan-oriented activities. Although busy in his capacity as publisher, Stan promises to contribute, support and supervise the new alliance.

Collaborating with Stan or creating the club, its symbol and products, illustrator and writer Jim Steranko has added his experience and ability as a graphic designer and comics expert to the new project. During a dozen meetings in the formative stages of the club, they discussed and developed a score of new ideas with the Marvel reader in mind. A sort of contagious enthusiasm developed and soon the team of Lee and Steranko had put together a club package that had the entire bullpen talking.

Production on the FOOM Club membership kits is already under way so that by the time the advertisement appears in the comics, all the material will be ready for mailing. Meanwhile work has begun on a number of other products which include games, checklists, premiums, posters, stationary, playing cards and other items too hot to be revealed at this time.

A great deal of FOOM's success will depend on the active participation of fandom. The FOOM MAGAZINE will be a showcase for promising young writers who will be called upon to submit Marvel-oriented articles and reviews. Fanzine editors will be approached for republication of any outstanding articles and everyone will be encouraged to submit well-written material for consideration.

FOOM will be the first large scale, professionally conducted organization with the fan in mind. The prices on the various games, products and other material will be kept as low as possible so that everyone can afford them. The ideas and projects planned are only the beginning, new ideas continue to be discussed, and as the club membership grows, so will the club's activities. FOOM will definitely not be a "do nothing" organization.

Part of the campaign to get FOOM off the ground will be the presence of a "FOOM IS HERE" blurb on the cover of every book on the February schedule. The word "FOOM" will also be used inside the books as a sound effect to remind readers what's happening.

All in all, the FOOM Club promises to be the most spectacular, colorful and exciting fan club ever offered. No other company has ever seriously approached its fans or readers. Now with Stan at the controls and Steranko plotting the course, Mighty Marvel is on the move again.

Look for the ads in the February Marvel Comics for full particulars concerning subscription price and mailing information.

So Face Front! As we said before, the fantastic, far-flung Fellowship of FOOM has been founded.

COMIC WANT LIST!

I need the following material for research in fine to mint condition. If you have any of these books, let me know their condition and price.

FIGHTING AMERICAN 6, 7

CAPTAIN AMERICA 27, 52, 54, 59, 61, 62, 65, 67

HEADLINE 37, 40-43, 46-48

MY DATE 1, 2, 5, 6

ALL-AMERICAN WESTERN 101, 104, 113-115

BLACK RIDER 13, 15-20, 22, 28-30

GUNHAWK 15

TEXAS KID 3, 4, 6, 8, 9

GHOST RIDER 3, 9, 11, 13, 15

CIRCUS 1, 2

MORE FUN 1, 2, 7, 8

SPIRIT SECTIONS 1946-1952

PRINCE VALIANT 1937-38 (FULL)

Art Correspondence Course 1920-30

Lone Ranger Western Town

I'm also looking for pulps by the boxfull – crime, western, love, adventure, misc. Tell me what you have and I'll make an offer!

STERANKO

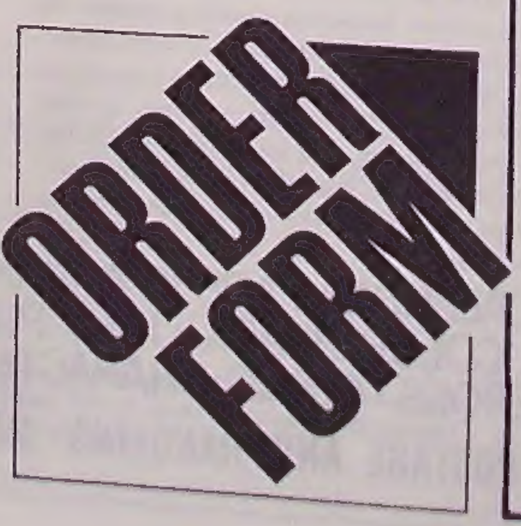
IMPORTANT

When subscribing to *COMIXSCENE* or ordering Supergraphics products, please follow the procedure outlined below: Subscribe to *COMIXSCENE* for a single issue or a year only—DO NOT SEND FOR ODD ISSUES. Subscriptions begin with the issue in production, not with previous issues. Single issues .50 – Six issue subscription $2.50. Back issues of *COMIXSCENE* are available at $1.00 each.

FOREIGN SUBSCRIPTIONS: Our mailing process does not allow for *COMIXSCENE* subscriptions outside the USA. Due to the high cost of mailing and special handling, an additional $2.00 charge per 6 issues must accompany each foreign subscription.

USE THE ORDER FORM when ordering Supergraphics products. If you don't wish to cut up the issue, make a photo copy of the form and fill it in—or write out your complete name and address on a separate piece of paper for EACH product ordered.

IMPORTANT: Print or type your name and address CLEARLY, and be sure to include your ZIP CODE. Unclear addresses and zips can only result in your order being lost in the mails. Insure your order by giving us clear and concise information.



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Use the order forms below to furnish the information needed to mail you the products you want. Check the boxes to indicate the material you are ordering. Add the amounts listed and write in the total on the line furnished. PRINT your name and address CLEARLY and include your zip code number. Fill out separate forms for the groupings listed below.

FOREIGN ORDERS (including Canada) in U.S. funds only. All orders outside U.S.A., add .25 postage and handling for each package ordered.

BOOKS

- ☐ Encyclopedia of Heroes - Vol. 1 $3.00 plus .25 postage
- ☐ Encyclopedia of Heroes - Vol. 2 $3.00 plus .25 postage
- ☐ Encyclopedia of Heroes - Vol. 3 $3.00 plus .25 postage
- ☐ All three of the above books $7.50 – we pay postage
- ☐ History of Comics - Vol. 1 $3.00 plus .25 postage
- ☐ History of Comics - Vol. 2 $5.00 plus .40 postage
- ☐ Mike Hinge Experience $3.00 plus .25 postage

I am enclosing _____

Please send the above items.

_____ name

_____ address

_____ city/state/zip

POSTERS

- ☐ History Vol. 1 poster $1.50 plus .50 postage
- ☐ History Vol. 2 poster $1.50 plus .50 postage
- ☐ Area 5 Viewscreen $2.00 plus .25 postage
- ☐ Onyx Cube $2.00 plus .25 postage
- ☐ Explo-logical $1.75 plus .25 postage
- ☐ Meta-magic $1.75 plus .25 postage
- ☐ Parsec City Plug-in No. 1 $2.00 plus .25 postage
- ☐ Parsec City Plug-in No. 2 $2.00 plus .25 postage
- ☐ Justice $1.75 plus .25 postage
- ☐ Deck 4 Zero $2.00 plus .25 postage
- ☐ Energy Sheet (Onyx) $1.75 plus .25 postage
- ☐ Daily Earth Chronicle (Onyx) $1.75 plus .25 postage
- ☐ Roach Bus (Onyx) $1.75 plus .25 postage
- ☐ Onyx Calendar (Onyx) $1.75 plus .25 postage
- ☐ Electronyx (Onyx) $1.75 plus .25 postage

I am enclosing _____

Please send the above items.

_____ name

_____ address

_____ city/state/zip

OTHER

- ☐ Super Hero Calendar $3.00 plus .25 postage
- ☐ Comixscene subscription $2.50 for 6 issues
- ☐ Comixscene Foreign Subscription $4.50 for 6 issues
- ☐ Comixscene back issues $1.00 each

I am enclosing _____

Please send the above items.

_____ name

_____ address

_____ city/state/zip

Send all orders to:
SUPERGRAPHICS
BOX 445
WYOMISSING, PA. 19610

CAPTAIN MARVEL IS NO SUPERMAN, BUT...

In talking to C.C. Beck, one rarely winds up talking exclusively about comic books. The topic of conversation is usually expanded to cover more than just the memorable stories behind Captain Marvel or Beck's career as an artist. Philosophy, advertising, economics, television or just the little known fact that chicken thieves invented the flintlock rifle, are reasons why the gray-haired cartoonist commands both your attention and respect.

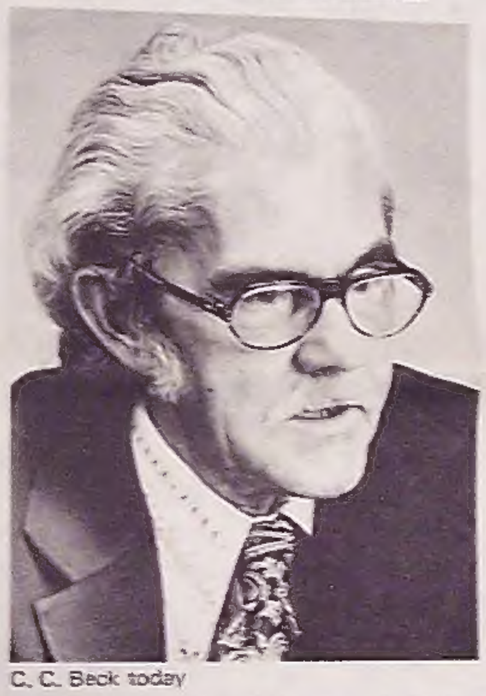
Enjoying his second comeback in the comic book industry since Fawcett had their doors closed in 1953, Beck is enthusiastically turning out two eight-page stories each month for National Periodical's new *Shazam* book. His work area is a small room in the front of the family's North Miami home. It is piled high with books, journals, reference material and drawing implements, but anything can be found with a short second of thought. The walls are virtually covered with homemade weapons, all of which look real enough but are, for the most part, mere cardboard, wood, string and paint.

Beck had originally heard of the reincarnation of the "Big Red Cheese" at the 1972 Phoenix convention, and after further information from a handful of Miami area fans, he submitted a tryout sketch to National Publisher Carmine Infantino for consideration. At the time, Julius Schwartz had already been chosen as editor and Denny O'Neil was given the bulk of the writing responsibility. Bob Oskner and Murphy Anderson had already submitted preliminary drawings in the hope of getting the assignment, while promotional ideas and gimmicks were being set into motion. Infantino was decidedly impressed with the "Rip Van Marvel" illustration Beck had submitted (see page 24), so after several personal exchanges the first two scripts were shipped off to Miami and *Shazam* was in production.

In working on a comic story, Beck likes to pencil, ink, letter and add coloring suggestions whenever he feels it necessary. "I like to letter," he says, "because that is the story and it's the story that the readers buy the book for!" He occassionally begins pencilling a story in the middle or manages to jump around from page to page in no special order. "Sometimes you don't get a full face view of an important character until the middle of the story, so I like to know what I'm drawing rather than go along using guesswork."

Beck believes that the time is almost perfect for a return of Captain Marvel to the comic books. "Comics are in exactly the same state now as they were in 1939. There are a great number of them on the stands and all of them are dead serious soap operas." He is quick to point out that Captain Marvel is no Superman," . . . despite what Louis Nizer or anyone else says. Marvel is the only humorous super-hero character around. He is not made up of just a bunch of humorous scenes pasted together in any order though. The story must have a point and it has to move. A series of long speeches just doesn't make it—the story has to fly!"

The visual creator of Captain Marvel does not consider himself any sort of illustrator, but rather a storyteller and cartoonist ("I'd rather read something funny like Mutt and Jeff"). He insists that the success behind a comic book or anything else sold commercially lies with how good the writer is. "Good writing is the basis of everything. Without good writing, an original inspiration just gets bogged down in technique. There are only about eight combinations we can work with in telling stories, but for the most part we've only used one of them in comics."



C. C. Beck today

The stories by O'Neil and Elliot Maggin in the three issues of *Shazam* completed thus far have been to Beck's liking, although he has the authority to implement changes whenever he deems it necessary. "The ideas in the stories so far have been quite good, but sometimes the writing isn't all that clear. For instance, the thinking behind putting Sivana in something like 'suspendium' (*Shazam* 1—"The World's Wickedest Plan)" is terrific, but getting him there was sometimes confusing. Writers sometime expect too much from a single panel. I don't believe in allowing fancy artwork to fill in the gaps or override the story in any way. The artwork should never look better than the story reads. That philosophy also gives me an excuse to draw lousy every so often."

For all the de-emphasis on the showiness of his artwork, Beck is a very cautious and deliberate artist. The drawing part is easy enough for him, but everything he puts down on paper must have a purpose. There must be that one specific reason behind every line, otherwise Beck is not fully satisfied.

There have not been many changes on Captain Marvel from a visual standpoint, but Billy Batson had been modernized in his choice of clothes and hair-style. Beck admits that Marvel's sideburns might be a bit longer, but for the most part, he is the same clean cut fellow he was twenty years ago. "I inserted a panel in the first story which showed two hippies looking astonished at first seeing Captain Marvel and shouting 'A guy with short hair, outasite!' From what I understand though, that has been left out."

Someone had recently asked him if he had any special feeling working for DC, the company that put Fawcett's line out of business. Beck has not been overly concerned about it. "National is the biggest and the best, so what is wrong with working for them? Despite all, Fawcett was getting ready to get out of the comic book business in 1953 anyway. Besides, I have more freedom now than I ever had before."

For the first three issues, Beck has been working on a monthly schedule, even though the *Shazam* book will be bi-monthly at first. He has also managed to team-up with O'Neil and Arizona-based artist Don Newton for a two-page *National Lampoon* strip called "The Relevancy of the Shazam Sayer." *Shazam* 2 will feature "The Astounding Arch Enemy," a story about the return of Mr. Mind written by O'Neil. The second original story will be Maggin's "The Nicest Guy In The World," while the reprint that issue will be "Captain Marvel Fights Niatpac Levram. The third issue features O'Neil's "A Switch in Time" and Maggin's "The Wizard of Phonograph Hill," along with another reprint.

Production chief Sol Harrison, artist Beck, and editor Julie Schwartz discuss the new book.

The second issue of *Shazam* will feature a cover like *Whiz* 112, with a photograph of three kids looking aghast as Captain Marvel flies out of the comic they are reading. Beck did the Billy Batson and Marvel figures for the first issue cover—in fact, he did them twice. A week before making his first visit to the DC offices in New York, he sent a finished version of the cover to editor Schwartz via Air Mail Special Delivery. When he arrived for his visit, the cover package still had not arrived. Giving in to the moodiness of the U.S. Postal Service, Beck sat down and started to recreate the drawing in one of the work rooms. "I just had gotten down to Marvel's knees when Julie Schwartz came into the room shouting 'Hold it! Hold It!' and telling me that the package had finally arrived."

When you ask Beck if he has any special feelings toward Captain Marvel he answers that he feels all characters in literature are more real than most people. "Besides, the key to the success of the strip is not in Marvel, but Billy Batson. Billy is the main character who gets into all the jams. Marvel is there only to bail him out. We try to use Marvel as sparingly as possible—we always did. He doesn't jump around from one disaster to another, but pops up only when he is needed."

National Periodicals will be pulling out all stops in promoting the return of Beck and Captain Marvel, but Beck has requested that they just let him stay at home and draw. "They've got buttons for all the distributors and Infantino will be appearing on a talk show over on the west coast, but I told them to please try and do as much as possible without me. I'd rather stay here." He has recorded several interviews and has consented to be Guest-of-Honor at the 1973 New York Comic Art Convention in July, but he would like to leave it at that.

Perhaps the best thing about Beck's philosophy on drawing the comics is his ability to be frank and simple. Like his artwork, he does not get overly technical but does not settle for being uncaringly sloppy just to finish a job. He walks a fine line of self-satisfaction. "Captain Marvel is for people with childish minds," says Beck, but he does not say it sarcastically or with a spark of deception. There is nothing wrong with being childish in Beck's mind. . . but the key is when or when not to be.

Discussing the qualities of being a good artist, Beck becomes even more sensible. "An artist must never draw anything that isn't necessary. Everything in the story must have a purpose and must make the story flow well." That certainly has been said before, but there are only a few artists in the industry who practice it as conscientiously as Beck. "To be a really good artist," he advances, "you have to be right on the edge of being rotten, but you can never go over that edge. A big nose on a clown is funny, but only up to a point. After that, it tends to distract from the original reason it was supposed to be funny."

Somehow you get the feeling that Captain Marvel just would not be happy unless he had C.C. Beck putting him down on paper. Shazam!

Gary Brown and Wayne DeWald

The accompanying reproductions of a script and art from a 1942 issue of CAPTAIN MARVEL illustrate the various stages a comic page goes through before it's finally printed. Note the discrepancy between the writer's description of the splash panel and the finished job.

CAPTAIN MARVEL and the TRUMPET of DOOM ~~Feelfair~~ Okay C.B. use in Capt. Marvel Adv. no 16

Title Splash: Captain Marvel, his arms spread, his back to the mouth of a huge trumpet---trying to keep the sound from coming out. ~~There may be a giant hand holding the trumpet.~~ Marvel is straining every muscle.

Caption: It was only a trumpet, little and battered, with a faint golden color that wouldn't dull or tarnish. But to this day Captain Marvel doesn't like to think of what might have happened if someone had played that trumpet! And neither will you after you've read this story of "The Trumpet That Couldn't Be Played."

Panel 5: Billy and Steamboat looking around living room of ancient house. The room is quite large, and gives the effect of emptiness, though there is some furniture---old high-backed chairs, a spinning wheel in a corner, a fireplace, oil portraits on wall. (Use minimum of props)

Caption: Billy and Steamboat have leased an old house for the summer...

STEAMBOAT: Looks kinda run down, don't it, Mistah Billy?
BILLY: The real estate man said it's the oldest house in this part of the country!

Panel 6: Billy and Steamboat are going upstairs to attic. Stairs are covered with dust. Banister is half askew, broken in places. or cobwebs

BILLY: Gosh! You'd think no one had been up here in hundreds of years!
STEAMBOAT: Somethin' tells me Ah ain't gwine like this place!

20
CAPTAIN MARVEL
CAPT. MARVEL
AND THE TRUMPET OF DOOM
IT WAS ONLY A TRUMPET, LITTLE AND BATTERED WITH A FAINT GOLDEN COLOR THAT WOULDN'T DULL OR TARNISH. BUT TO THIS DAY CAPTAIN MARVEL DOESN'T LIKE TO THINK WHAT MIGHT HAVE HAPPENED IF SOMEONE HAD PLAYED THAT TRUMPET! AND NEITHER WILL YOU-AFTER YOU'VE READ THIS STORY OF— "THE TRUMPET THAT COULDN'T BE PLAYED."
BILLY AND STEAMBOAT HAVE LEASED AN OLD HOUSE FOR THE SUMMER—
LOOKS KINDA RUN DOWN, DON'T IT, MISTAH BILLY?
THE REAL ESTATE MAN SAID IT'S THE OLDEST HOUSE IN THIS PART OF THE COUNTRY!
GOSH, YOU'D THINK NO ONE HAD BEEN UP HERE IN HUNDREDS OF YEARS!
SOMPIN TELLS ME AH AIN'T GWINE LIKE THIS PLACE!

As the first step in translating a Captain Marvel story into pictures artists sketch a rough layout of each panel, showing action and dialogue.

Letterers then finish off dialogue and captions, and a specialist details Captain Marvel himself. Notice pencilled instructions for later artists.

Secondary figures are next finished, as well as furniture, background, etc. Note that the rug is now rumpled. Panel is ready for final inking.

Inked, corrected, and all pencil lines erased, the panel is now ready for the engraver. Captain Marvel features simple drawing, clear story.

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COMIXSCENE PHOTO GALLERY

The photos on this page are a time capsule into the past of the 1940's when Captain Marvel was one of the biggest-selling books on the newsstands. Here is the crew (and some friends) responsible for The World's Mightiest Mortal. 1) Top Row: Otto Binder, Ray Harford, Vic Dowd, Jack Binder, Herman Stachel. Middle: Wendell Crowley, Pete Costanza, Pete Riss, Bob Boyajian. Bottom: Ken Bald, Kurt Schaffenberger, three girl entertainers. 2) The Binder house and studio - 1941. 3) The Becks celebrating New Year's Eve. 4) The C. C. Becks, the Otto Binders, the Jack Binders. 5) Otto and Earl Binder - Eando Binder. 6) Otto contemplating the next CM adventure. 7) Otto Binder, Ray Palmer, Julie Schwartz. See Volume 2 of the *History of Comics* to learn who's who!

5

NATIONAL NEWS

Joe Simon has returned to the comic scene once again, accepting the editorship of several National books and doing research and development work for the company. One of the books will be *Black Magic*, a reincarnation of his old Crestwood title. It will feature reprints of old Simon and Kirby material, with new stuff in the realm of probability. Joe will also handle *Young Romances*, *Young Love* and several other new titles.

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The accompanying covers are reproductions from the original *Black Magic* books in the 1950's. They are pictured here as a preview of things to come, and to refresh fandom's memory of the old series.

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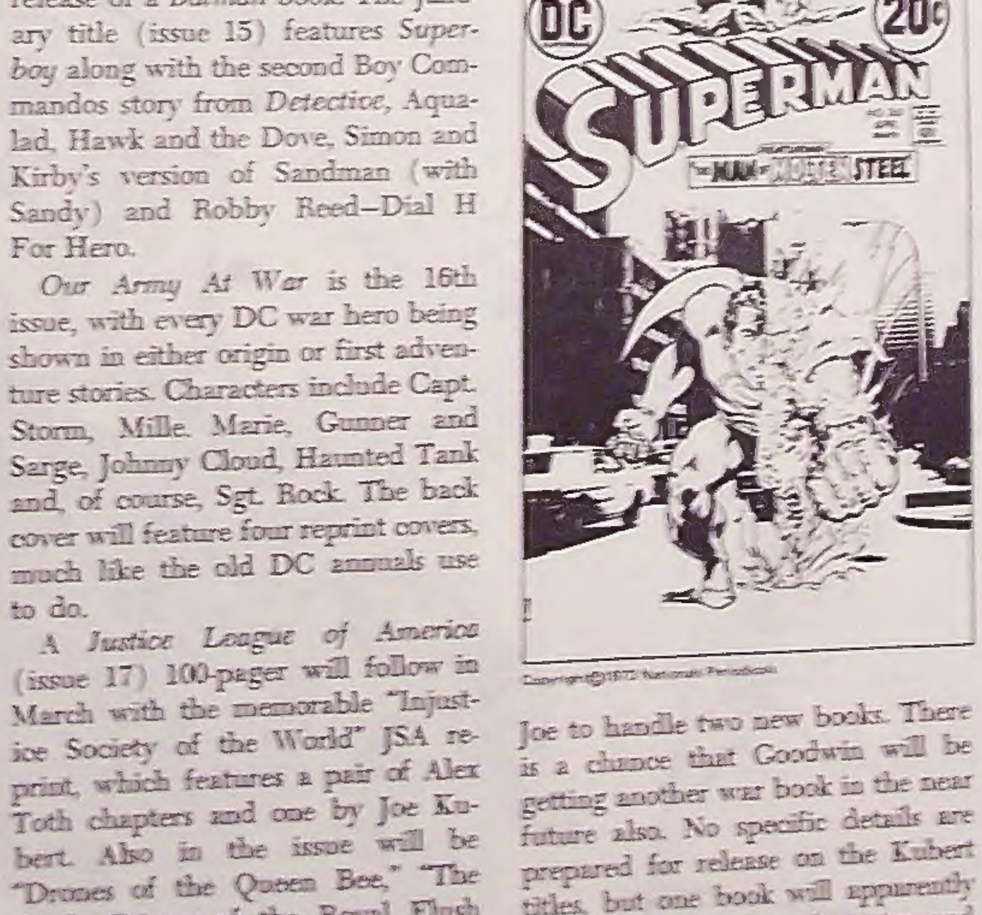
Boy Commandos will also be making a dramatic comeback, gaining their own 20¢ book in March. Outside of new covers, the entire comic will be reprinted material from the Simon and Kirby days.

The Superman land and museum in Metropolis, Illinois is having be cancelled in favor of the 100-page, 50¢ Super Spectaculars.

There will be a steady line of the large comic books on a monthly basis, beginning with the December put into the project. "In the early part of June," said Bob Westerfield a 44-year old owner of dry-cleaning business, "we got our okay, typed up our prospectus and were ready to sell stock, but everybody had lost interest." By October only one-fourth of the stock issue had been sold. Metropolis, in conjunction with National Periodicals, has planned on both in town activities and buildings, as well as publications which could be bought in the city or ordered through the mail. National is now renegotiating the contract with the Metropolis Recreation Department which it gets $50,000 for the use of Superman's name and production of Superman memorabilia.

As mentioned in the first issue of *Comixscene*, there will be a great number of reprint titles from National early in '73. However, only one or two of them (if that many) will see more than two issues. Titles like *Johnny Thunder*, *Challengers of the Unknown*, *Doom Patrol*, *Four Star Battle Tales* and *Metal Men* will problems. Legal hassles with stock and state security laws has put a damper on the proposed sale of public shares in the project, thereby leaving the city with no funds to



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release of a *Batman* book. The January title (issue 15) features *Superboy* along with the second Boy Commandos story from *Detective*, Aqualad, Hawk and the Dove, Simon and Kirby's version of Sandman (with Sandy) and Robby Reed–Dial H For Hero.

Our Army At War is the 16th issue, with every DC war hero being shown in either origin or first adventure stories. Characters include Capt. Storm, Mille. Marie, Gunner and Sarge, Johnny Cloud, Haunted Tank and, of course, Sgt. Rock. The back cover will feature four reprint covers, much like the old DC annuals use to do.

A *Justice League of America* (issue 17) 100-pager will follow in March with the memorable "Injustice Society of the World" JSA reprint, which features a pair of Alex Toth chapters and one by Joe Kubert. Also in the issue will be "Drones of the Queen Bee," "The Cards Crimes of the Royal Flush Gang," and a pre-Kirby Sandman story in which our hero swims a raging river in just his trunks and gas mask.

Other Super Spectaculars on schedule are *Superman*, *Tarzan* (with all Burroughs material), and quite possibly a *Shazam* issue with all Fawcett characters. Most of the books will feature some variation of a wrap-around cover (Berni Wrightson recently completed one) and a wide assortment of heroes.

Joe Kubert will be giving up *Our Fighting Forces* (The Losers) to Archie Goodwin, in order to allow

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Joe to handle two new books. There is a chance that Goodwin will be getting another war book in the near future also. No specific details are prepared for release on the Kubert titles, but one book will apparently feature a continuing character and quite possibly will utiline material which is currently in public domain.

Adventure Comics, undergoing a format change, will carry "The Vigilante," "The Black Orchid" (a new strip by Sheldon Mayer and Tony DeZuniga) and "The Adventurers' Club." Features will continue to change every two or three issues under the editorship of Joe Orlando. Orlando also has a new humor book, slated for late spring release, which has been described as "unusually weird."

Detective 434 will be the first of a two-part series featuring "The Spook," written by Frank Robbins and drawn by Irv Novick. "The Spook" is a gangland Houdini, who aides in jailbreaks and spectacular crimes. After the series ends, Archie Goodwin will take over as editor of *Detective* and several changes will be initiated. The book will be dropped to six times a year and new people will be brought in to work on the stories. Archie indicated that he would like to take Batman even further back to the character's original concept, but a final decision has not been reached as of yet.

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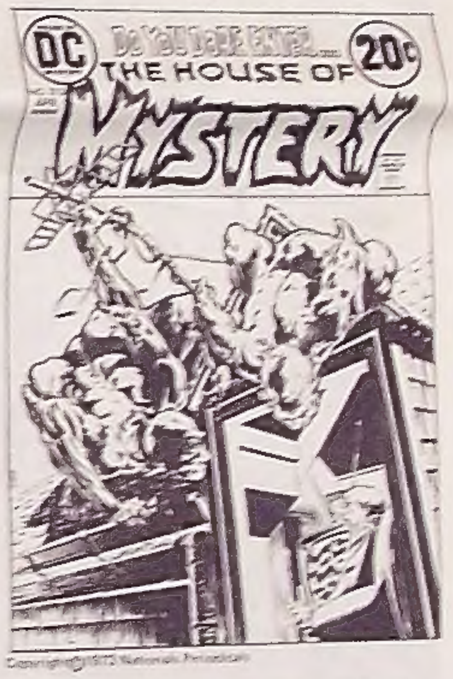

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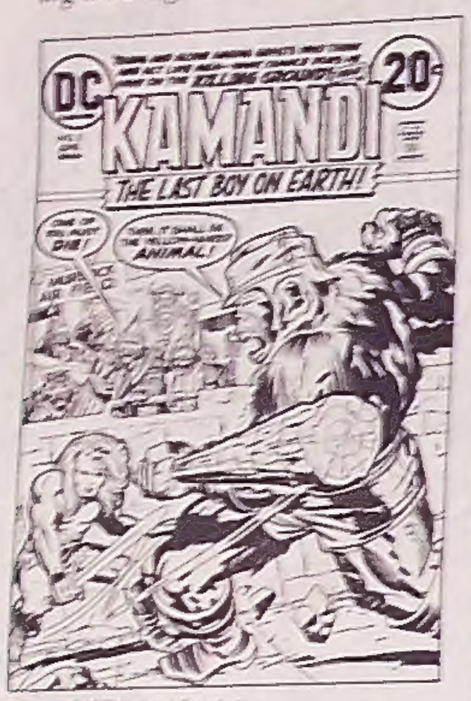
Julius Schwartz, who denied the report from other news sources that he is retiring, told *Comixscene* he plans to continue editing "until the year 2001." Meanwhile he will be getting several new books to edit, one of which will be a revival of *Strange Sports Stories* as written by Frank Robbins. The stories are science fiction wrapped in a sports setting. The rumors of a possible Aquaman-Mark Spitz team-up are declared totally false.

On the other side of the Mississippi, Jack Kirby continues to churn out book after book for National. *Demon* 5 will begin a two-part take-off on "Phantom of the Opera," entitled

"Phantom of the Sewers." in which Glenda is kidnapped and Jason Blood has all kinds of difficulties. *Mister Miracle* remains busy as he manages to get trapped in "The Dictator's Dungeon," only to escape again for the next issue. Additional developments in the months to come find Ted Brown turning up alive again and Mister Miracle challenging a strange cult. *Kamandi* 5 introduces a new girl character named Flower, who not only has the story in issue number six named after her ("Flower"), but is also the center of the book's tragic ending. All the Kirby books are colored by National staffer Jerry Serpe.



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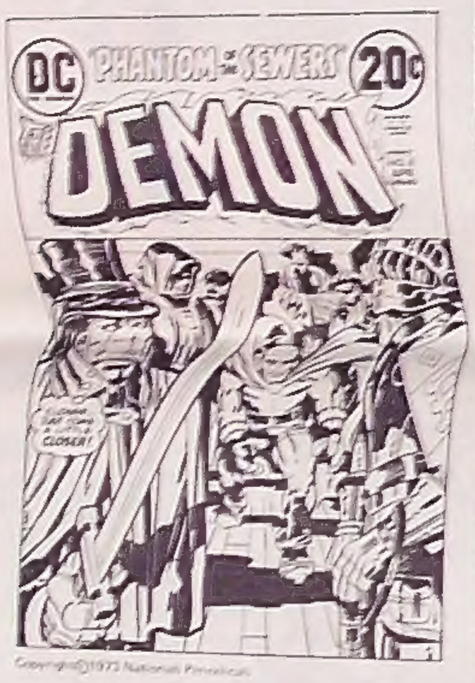

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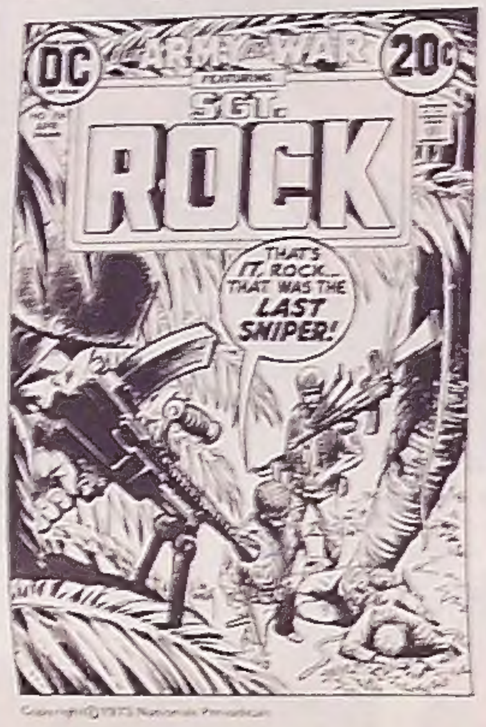
Challengers of the Unknown, one of the reprint titles which has a small chance of continuing after the first two issues, will carry Kirby-Wood reprints for as long as possible. *Johnny Thunder* will feature four stories per issue, including work by Mort Drucker and Alex Toth, as well as "Nighthawk" and "The Trigger Twins." By the way, *The Trigger Twins* is the title of a one-shot book of reprints of the old western series by Carmine Infantino.

The other reprint titles with an outside chance to survive are *Secret Origins* and *Wanted*. The *Secret Origins* book has features planned for the first four issues already, including Superman, Batman, Flash and Hawkman's first encounter with The Ghost for issue 1; Supergirl, Atom and Green Lantern in issue 2, a 13-page Wonder Woman story in 3 and a 15-page Kid Eternity yarn



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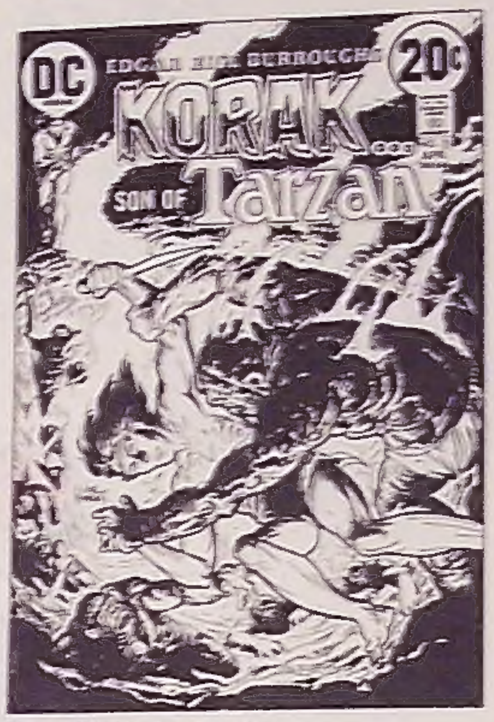
rounding out 4. Vigilante and other minor characters will be used as back-up features for the last two books. *Wanted* 8 has "Flash vs. Captain Cold" and "Dr. Fate vs. Mr. Who," a villain apparently based on Stanley Weinbaum's "The Adaptive Ultimate," a chameleon-type character.

Action Comics has been broken down into three features, a 10-page *Superman* story, 6 or 7 pages of Green Arrow and a 6-page Human Target story each issue. The Human Target, now capably being handled by Dick Giordano, will do an origin story in the third and fourth installments.

Justice League of America has a long list of villains and new members on tap in the next few issues. Writer Len Wein has developed stories in which the JLA faces "The Shaggy Man," as well as gaining Elongated Man and Red Tornado as allies and new members. There will also be a two-part story packed with old Quality characters like Uncle Sam, The Ray, Black Condor, Phantom Lady and Doll Man. Len is also trying to squeeze Blackhawk and Plastic Man into the story if at all possible. Dick Dillon is the lucky artist who will draw these star-studded, heroic classics. Eclipso eventually joins the JLA too, if Len and Dick last that long.



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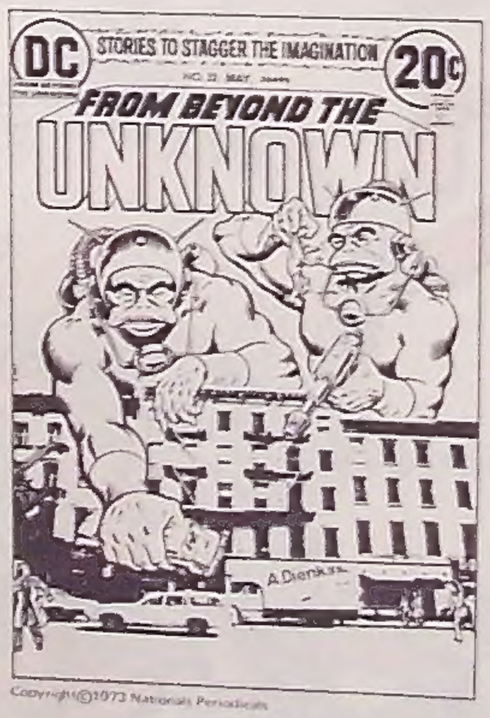

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"The Spawn of Frankenstein" will alternate as a back-up feature with "Doctor 13" in *The Phantom Stranger*. There is also a team-up utilizing all three characters in the works. Mary Wolfman will script National's version of Frankenstein.

Speaking of team-ups, there will be a Batman-Shadow merging sometime in the near future under the direction of Denny O'Neil. O'Neil has already finished the first issue of *The Shadow*, "The Doom Puzzle," the latest candidate for art work is Mike Kaluta. Wrightson, Steranko and Toth have all had the opportunity to do it, but declined for one reason or another.

Steve Englehart is working on a Batman story which has been drawn by Sal Amendola. Sal, who began his comic book career in the National production department, has also been given the art assignment on "John Carter."

Murphy Anderson will illustrate "Beyond the Farthest Star," while Dan Green switches to "Pellucidar." Other new art assignments include

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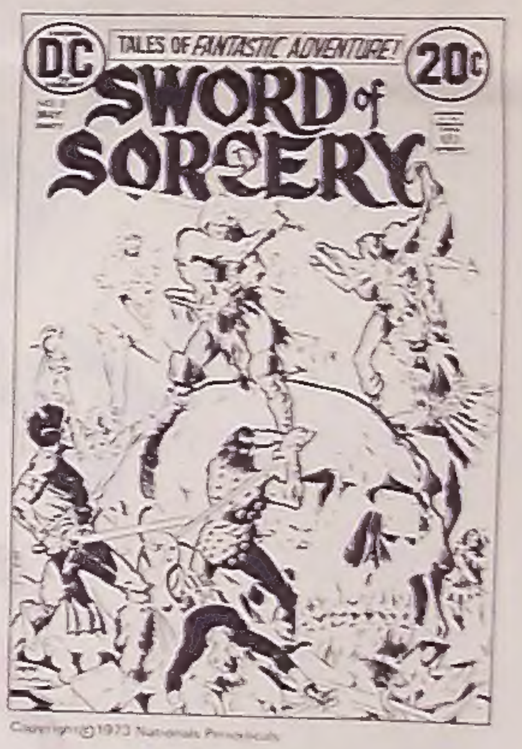

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Dick Giordano on "Vigilante," Dave Cockrum doing "Legion of Super-Heroes," Alex Toth handling a story for *Weird War Tales*, and Don Heck continuing on the new (again) *Wonder Woman* books.

Sword of Sorcery will feature a cover by Mike Kaluta for the first issue and a Chaykin-Wrightson collaboration on 2. Liz Sapien is the colorist for this new title.

Bernard Bailey, former Golden Age artist for National, has turned out a mystery story for one of the Orlando edited books. E. Nelson Bridwell has busied himself by adapting a pair of horror stories for future DC books. "August Heat" is from a 1910 story by W.F. Harvey, the author of "The Beast With Five Fingers," and Nelson has also taken a Bram Stoker story, "The Secret of the Glowing Gold" and worked it into comic book form.

GOOD CHEER
CHEER
REINDEER
BE SINCERE
BEER
PERSEVERE
LOTSA BEER
HAPPY NEW YEAR!

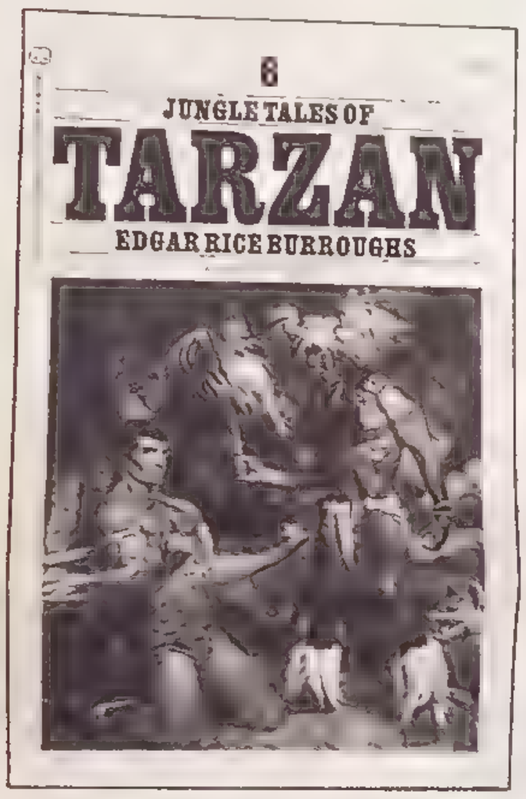
STERANKO

COMIXSCENE
JANUARY — FEBRUARY
FIFTY CENTS
NO 2

MEDIA SCENE

BALLANTINE'S paperback lineup for 1973 will feature the following books: January — *Orlando Furioso: The Ring of Angelica*—translated by Richard Hodgens from an epic Italian poem by Ariosto, introduction by Lin Carter, $1.25. *Syzygy*—Michael Coney, tale of young man caught up in the chaos of the colony planet Arcadia, whose six moons go into erratic orbit every 52 years, $1.25. *A Werewolf Among Us*—Dean Koontz, Baker St. Cyr, a cyborg (half human and half computer), is hired by a wealthy family to solve murders on their private planet, $1.25.

February — *The Charwoman's Shadow* — Lord Dunsany, magical tale set in twilight of Spain's Golden Age, $1.25. *Neutral Stars*—Dan Morgan and John Kippax, 3rd in Venturer 12 spaceship series, $1.25. *Gods and Golems*—anthology of 5 novelettes by Lester Del Ray, $1.25.



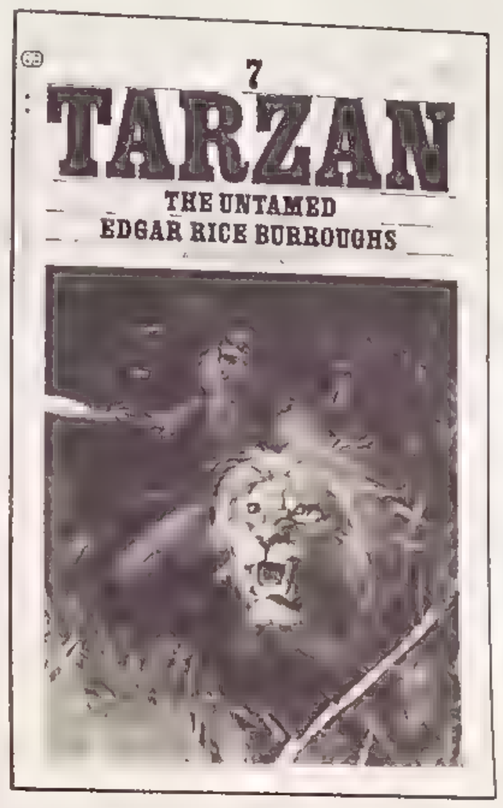
Tarzan: The first six were reissued in Nov. (. . . *of the Apes, Return of, Beasts of, Son of, the Jewels of Opar, Jungle Tales of*), the next six in Dec. (*the Untamed, the Terrible, and the Golden Lion, and the Ant Man, Lord of the Jungle, and the Lost Empire*) and the next six in March (13-18). 19-24 have not been scheduled yet. The covers are similar to the last edition in that they use the same paintings, but the price is 95¢ a book.

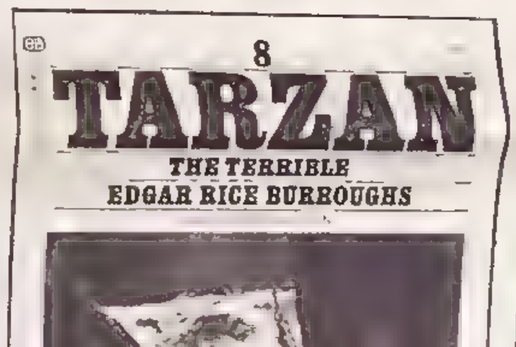
John Carter—These books will be re-issued in order, one a month, starting in March.

BANTAM BOOKS continues to publish the Doc Savage novels, with *The Metal Master*, January's release, being the seventy-second of series. *The Seven Agate Devils* is scheduled next for March distribution. No more Savage books are scheduled until at least June which is a three month lapse; last year the schedule went from monthly to bi-monthly and now it seems to be going quarterly. Can this mean that after eight years it's not selling as well as before? Could the Avenger series be giving it a run for its money? Time will tell.

WARNER PAPERBACK LIBRARY will continue to issue The Avenger on a monthly schedule, and it looks as though it may be giving Bantam's Doc Savage some competition. Starting with January, titles are (8) *Glass Mountain*, (9) *Tuned for Murder*, (10) *The Smiling Dogs*, (11) *River of Ice*, (12) *The Flame Breathers*, (13) *Murder on Wheels*, and (14) *The Three Gold Crows*. All books are 75¢.

Miscellany: In January WPL will





release *Understanding Tolkien and The Lord of The Rings* — William Ready, and *When Worlds Collide* — an SF classic by Phillip Wylie and Edwin Balmer. February releases will include *W. C. Fields and Me* — by Carlotta Monti, his wife for 14 years, and *The Mad Book of Word Power* — Max Brandel. WPL has the rights to re-issue the Mad books that Signet originally published. One of the first will be *Son of Mad*. All their Signet re-issues will have new covers and cost 75¢.

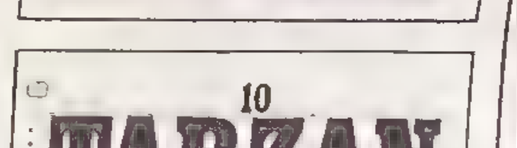
ACE, still the largest paperback publisher of science fiction, will release in January: *Science Fiction: The Great Years* — an anthology edited by Carol and Frederick Pohl, $1.25. It will start off a series of books by different authors which will have a seal labeling them as "SF From The Great Years." The second book will also be released this month entitled *The Moon Is Hell* by the late John Campbell, the story of humans who set up a colony on the moon before NASA got there. Also included is a second novel from his old magazine *Unknown*, 75¢. After that SFFTGY will be released one a month.

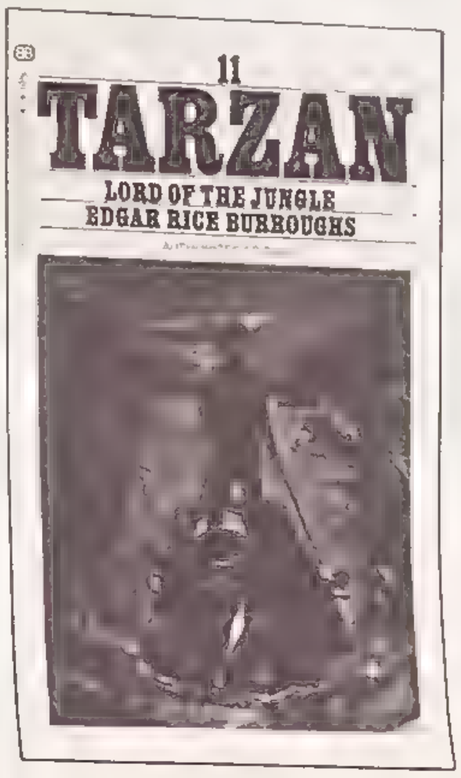
Perry Rhodan (21) — *The Cosmic Decoy* — K. H. Scheer. Aliens invade the solar system of Perry's home planet of Terra, 75¢. *Alien Planet* — Fletcher Pratt, Earthman is kidnapped by alien to superscientific planet, 75¢. Finally the Ace SF Double of the Month, *The Sky Is Falling* and *Badge Of Infamy* both by Lester Del Rey, both written under the premise that the universe is ruled by Martians, 95¢.

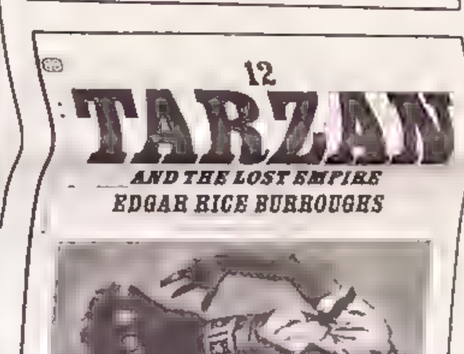
February — *The Best From Fantasy And Science Fiction* — 19th Series — edited by Edward L. Ferman with cartoons by Gahan Wilson, includes stories by Theodore Sturgeon, Robert Silverberg, and Larry Niven. *Four For Tomorrow* — anthology by Roger Zelezny, includes Nebula winner *The Doors Of His Face, The Lamps Of His Mouth* and an introduction by Theodore Sturgeon, 95¢. *Tomorrow Lies In Ambush* — a collection of short stories by Bob Shaw, 95¢. *The Men And The Mirror* — Ross Rocklynne, a frictionless mirror is a trap for explorers who are caught on a runaway planet on collision course with the sun, 95¢. *Operation Umanaq* — John Rankine, mislabeled fugitive fights modern war waged with an old weapon - ice, 75¢. *Ordeal In Otherwhere* — Andre Norton, woman who escapes from her home when invaders overrun it, takes a job as a buyer of cloth from the mysterious race of Wyverns, 75¢

The Ace Double of the Month is *Code Duello* and *Computer War* both by Mack Reynolds, computers as the ultimate controlling weapon is the theme of these two stories, 95¢.

March — *Looking Backward From The Year 2000* — Mack Reynolds,





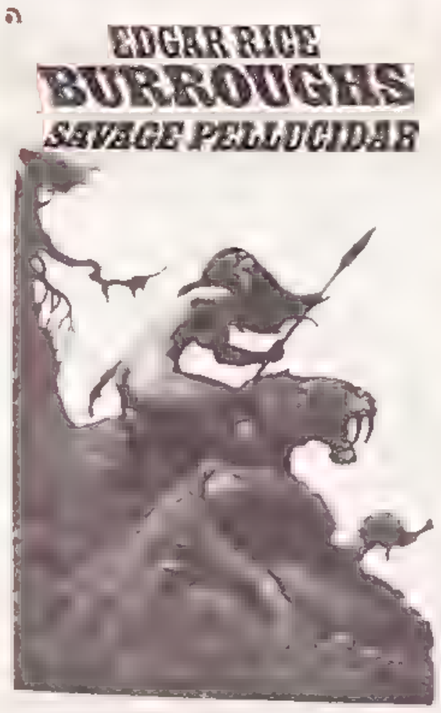


a man is put into a hypnotic trance in 1960 as part of a cure and wakes up in the year 2000. 95¢. *Gender Genocide* — Edmond Cooper, Woman Exterminator hunts kilted monsters of Scottish Moors, 95¢. *Victory On Janus* — Andre Norton, The Renfro and the Ifts battle lookalike enemies to save their homeland, 75¢ Perry Rhodan (22) — *The Fleet Of The Springers* — Kurt Mahr, Perry and his crew fight 30 alien spacecraft, 75¢. And last but not least, *Planet Of Exile* — Ursula K. Le Guin, Fantastic adventures on the distant planet Eltanin, 75¢. The Ace Double for March consists of *The Sun Destroyers* — Ross Rocklynne and *A Yank At Valhalla* — Edmond Hamilton, 95¢.

ERB Series — Maybe you've noticed but since July Ace has been re-issuing books in the ERB series in regular paperback size with new

covers. So far five have come out which include *The Eternal Savage* (Krenkel cover), *The Mad King* (new Frazetta), *The Monster Men* (Mas cover), *Pellucidar* (new Frazetta), and *At The Earth's Core* new Frazetta).

Ace will be releasing 9 ERB books in January, 8 of which will have new Frank Frazetta covers. The titles are *Back to The Stone Age, Land Of Terror, The Land Of Hidden Men, Beyond The Farthest Star, The Outlaw of Torn, The People That Time Forgot, Savage Pellucidar, Tanar Of*

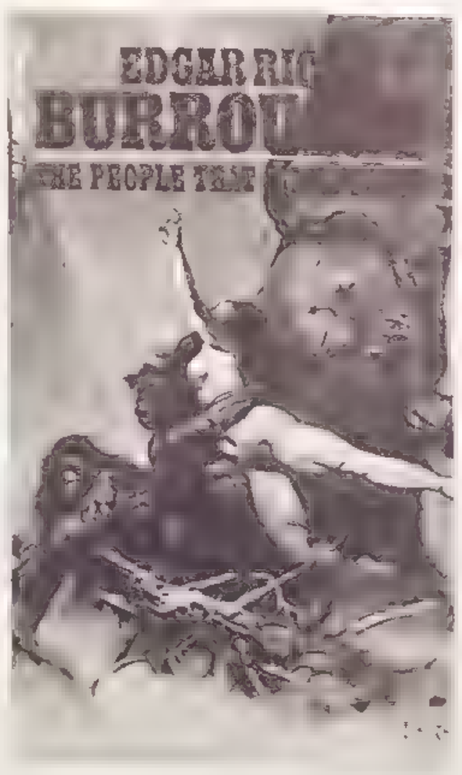


Pellucidar, and *Wizard of Venus* (this one keeps the Krenkel cover used on the previous edition). In June, Ace will release another four re-issues (titles aren't scheduled yet) also with new Frazetta covers, and finally, in October Ace will release four more ERB books that have never been published previously in paperback form. Titles as of now are unconfirmed.

Ace Miscellany: 10 novels that have won either the Hugo or Nebula awards will be released as 10 separate paperbacks all at once in March. *Cheap Thrills*, Ron Goulart's hardcover on the days of the dime novel, will be released as an Ace paperback sometime in June or July. Incidentally, all the new ERB reissues will have a price of 75¢ instead of the 60¢ on previously released editions.

NATIONAL LAMPOON'S theme for the January issue is Death and it includes Deadman comix. February is Sexual Frustration with a Howard Taft comic section (the reason being Howie had no sex life). March brings Sweetness In Life with a cover by Harry Friedman, last of the great *Collier* cover painters who did those happy, rosy-cheeked family scenes so typical of the forties. Bigotry is the April motif and Violence is May.

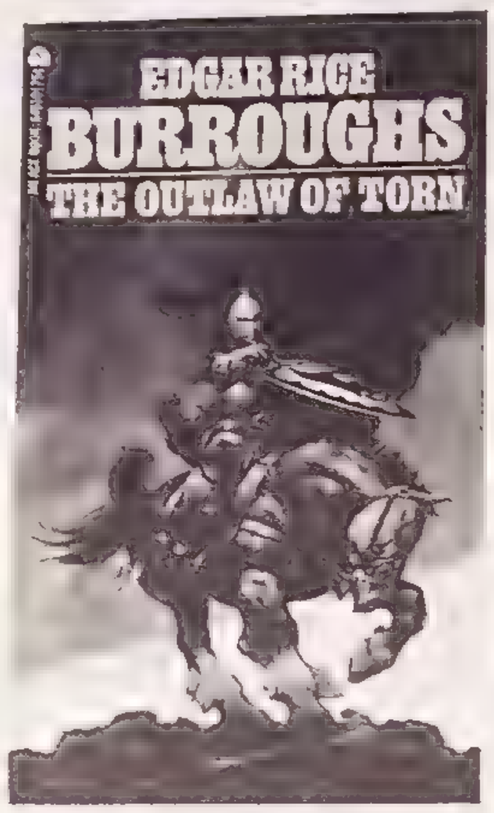
Son-of-God comics will now be a regular feature. Neal Adams is already working on the third and a fourth has been written. *The 2nd Best of NatLamp* will be out in March and a third one is planned for October which will be an *Encyclopedia Anthology* by Michael O'Donohue with all new material. *NatLamp* wants to keep their future paperbacks on a ratio of one reprint

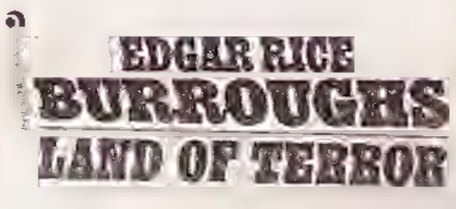


to two original material books. So the next three paperbacks will be *NatLamp Letter Columns* (reprint), *The Liberal Book*, and a parody on the Hardcover book *I'm OK, You're OK*.

NatLamp's first record, *Radio Dinner* is in the top 100 (between 80-90) and is enjoying good sales considering there is no airplay time allowed for it on radio because of the nature of its content. Also, there will be a *NatLamp* show opening in January at the Village Gate in NY and a record of it will be made. There is still a third record planned for mid '73. And finally, about future themes, some of them up for consideration are Modern Times, True (a whole issue of nothing but truths), Sophmoric (September?), and Sports (October?).

A chronological collection of the Will Eisner *Spirit* stories is now being issued in the form of ten 8-page sections each month. Although the reproduction is less than admirable on the first package, promises of better results once they can shoot from originals and stats rather than the actual newspapers have been given. The packages are sold in





monthly and quarterly lots instead of separately. Four months (40 sections) is $13 and can be ordered from; Spirit Publications, 116 South Vista Street, Los Angeles, California 90036.

The Monster Times will be getting back to their regular bi-weekly schedule in the very near future, after struggling with distribution and printing problems for several months. Upcoming issues will feature a "Hercules" article by Marty Pasko, Dwight Decker on "Perry Rhodan," an interview with Russell Myers ("Broom Hilda") and brand new material from Basil Wolverton. The famous Washington artist has done five full-page pieces for *Monster Times* and will also be writing an article on himself. The Wolverton material will be used as soon as it is all in and completed. Issue 20 will be an all-Frankenstein issue, with emphasis on the films and comic book versions.

"Stones" a CBS movie for Tuesday night will feature Chuck Connors and Will Hutchins (remember Will in "Sugarfoot?") in a ghost story about spooks on an airliner in flight. Also upcoming will be a Rod Serling narrated special called "In Search of the Ancient Astronauts." It explores the possibility of visits to Earth by other beings in past eras and will be aired January 5.

Roger Moore will be starring in "Live and Let Die," the new James Bond picture. Paul and Linda McCartney will write the theme for the movie and will perform it with their group, "Wings."

Twentieth Century Fox recently unveiled their plans concerning films to be released in 1973. Among those disclosed were *Battle for the Planet of the Apes*, the fifth in the "Apes" series, scheduled for May release. Also scheduled in May is *The Coming of Hellhouse*, written by Richard

(*Omega Man*) Matheson.

In June, *Dirty Mary and Crazy Larry* written by sci-fi/pulp scripter Leigh Brackett will be released. Slated for production is *French Connection II*, a sequel that carries the chase from New York to France. Science fiction films are also in the planning stages, such as *Journey of The Oceanauts*, set in the year 1991, and being produced by Arthur P. Jacobs of "Apes" fame. Also coming from 20th Century is *Zardoz*, set on the planet Vortex, and is written, produced, and directed by John (*Point Blank*) Boorman.

Tomorrow Entertainment, Inc. has announced production commencement of *The Hobbit* by J.R.R. Tolkein, being produced and directed by Arthur Rankin, Jr. and Jules Bass, both prolific British animators.

Upcoming TV films will include *Stranded*, a science fiction tale by Bing Crosby Productions, written by Gerold Sanford, which will air on NBC as a two-hour feature.

The Shadow will be coming to TV as a 90-minute pilot in the 1973 1974 season. Scripted by Jimmy Sangster (who wrote the [illegible] series for Hammer), *The* [illegible] will be produced by Screen Gems for the CBS network and will be considered for an hour-long series of its own.

MARVEL NEWS

The Marvel Comics Group will be expanding their publishing efforts in the spring of next year by introducing a new line of pulps and four black and white comic magazines.

After cautiously experimenting over the years with one-shot items like *Spectacular Spiderman* and *Savage Tales*, Marvel will plunge head first into the black and white horror magazine market. The four new magazines will immediately establish them as the largest publisher of black and white comics in the business. Each book will cost 75¢ and appear bi-monthly, although the first issues of each title will be staggered over a four month release period.

All of the books will be horror-oriented and feature mostly new material, but they will also carry several reprints from the 1950's. In addition to the comic material, the books will feature a combination of new visual ideas to help them get underway.

The first book due out is *Dracula* and it will go on sale in February. The character will be based on the same Dracula in the color comic (which will continue on its merry way), but the series and story-line will not be continuous from book to book. Instead, the Dracula in the black and white magazine will freely be used in different settings and time periods.

The first issue features a painted cover by Boris Vallejo, and a lead story placing Dracula in today's New York City. Gerry Conway will script the first story, with Gene Colan on pencils and Tom Palmer inking. "Suffer Not A Witch" picks up Dracula at the Salem witch trials in 1641, and features art by Alan Weiss and Dick Giordano. Roy Thomas, who also edits all of the magazines, will script. The third new story is by Steve Gerber, Rich Buckler and Pablo Marcos, and sets Drac in Paris during the early 1900's.

The second magazine will be a monster-oriented book, carrying stories like "The Man Who Cried Were-Wolf" and the Ralph Reese illustrated 'Solomon Kane' series. It goes on sale in March, while the other two (still primarily in the planning stages) will hit the newsstands in April and May. Production work on the four books will be supervised by Sol Brodsky and assisted by Marvin Wolfman.

The new line of pulps are also in the early planning stages at this writing. The first book will be called *The Bedtime Book of Horror* and will feature writing by such notables as Theodore Sturgeon, Harlan Ellison and others. Gerry Conway will be editing these books, taking some of the editorial load off of Roy's shoulders. All covers will be painted.

Another truly significant breakthrough at Marvel has been an arrangement whereby original artwork will be returned to the artists. As one of the more controversial items in the field over the past few years, most artists feel that they should be able to have their originals returned on request.

In the past, companies have taken either an 'I-don't-care' attitude or a strict 'nothing back' policy, however since the value of originals have seemingly skyrocketed, the artists feel they should have the right to own or sell the pages for profit since the company secures all printing rights. Publisher Stan Lee deserves the credit for not only expanding the Marvel line in new directions, but for taking care of his staff too. Another first for Mighty Marvel.

In staff changes at Marvel, John Romita has been appointed art director. He will no longer be doing complete interior art, but will rather help new artists with storytelling techniques and work on cover layouts. Marie Severin has been given complete control over all coloring work, in addition to her regular art duties. Marie, if you will recall, was the chief colorist at E.C. in the 50's.

John Albano is now working for Marvel, writing both for the regular color comics and the new black and white line.

Barry Smith has returned from England hoping to illustrate children's books regularly and comics as supplement work. Barry says comic book work takes too long to complete and there is not enough money involved in it in relation to the time spent. He will be doing a goodly amount of work for Marvel, however, pencilling mystery and horror stories for the various books. He is also teaming up with Roy Thomas on "Worms In The Earth," a Bran Mak Morn story for an underground comic.

Neal Adams is no longer doing work on *War of the Worlds*, after turning in only part of the first story months late as usual. Howard Chaykin will complete the second half of the story, which was written by Conway and inked by Dave Cockrum.

Bill Everett suffered a heart attack in November and is currently under intensive care in a New York hospital. Bill had just started back as the full-time *Sub-Mariner* artist beginning in issue 62, doing 14-page stories each issue. The new back-up feature in the book will be the 6-page "Tales of Lost Atlantis" series, written by Gerber and drawn by Chaykin.

Steve Englehart and Steve Gerber are no longer working in the offices on the actual Marvel staff, but are both freelancing now. Englehart has traded the writing chores on *Doc Savage* (which he was none too enthusiastic about in the first place) to Gardner Fox for the *Dracula* comic book assignment. Steve will also script the last issue of *Ringo Kid*, which is being cancelled along with *Outlaw Kid*.

Mike Ploog goes back to inking his own work on *Werewolf By Night* 5, which is coincidentally the first issue written by Len Wein. Len will also be taking over *King Kull*, where his first story will be an adaptation of Robert E. Howard's "Wolfshead." Tom Sutton is supposedly preparing to take over the art chores on the *Ghost Rider* book.

Among the new comics from Marvel, there is another team-up book scheduled for spring-summer release. Like the Spiderman-dominated *Marvel Team-Up*, this new and untitled book will pair the Thing with a different hero or villain each issue. There will also be a science fiction comic featuring new material out at around the same time. Originally titled *Weird Wonder Tales*, the book will be released as *Worlds Unknown*.

In a shocking series of developments, both Gwen Stacey and the Green Goblin will be killed off in an upcoming issue of *Spiderman*. Aunt May, however, remains intact and will probably outlive them all. Meanwhile, *Red Wolf* will be brought through time to the present through ingenius methods only possible in the comic books.

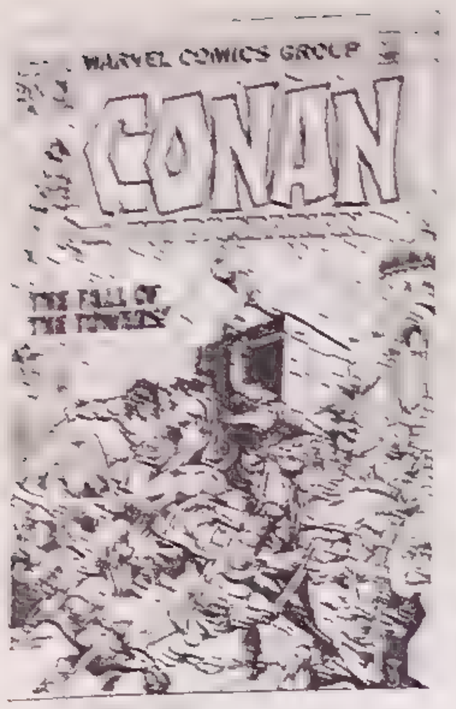
There is a three-part series of stories appearing in *Journey Into Mystery*, beginning with Robert Bloch's "The Shambler From The Stars" written by Ron Goulart, drawn by Jim Starlin, and inked by Tom Palmer in the third issue. H.P. Lovecraft's "Haunter of the Dark" by Goulart, Colan and Dan Adkins *will run in the 4th issue, while the* "Shadow from the Steeple" story will appear in 5. Another Bloch adaptation, it also is written by Goulart and illustrated by Rich Buckler.

Buscema, who has been doing an incredible amount of work in the comics as well as keeping up with his new restaurant in NewYork has completed his third *Conan* story, based on Howard's "Blood of Bal Shazar." Sal Buscema and Ernie Chua have been assigned to ink *Conan*.

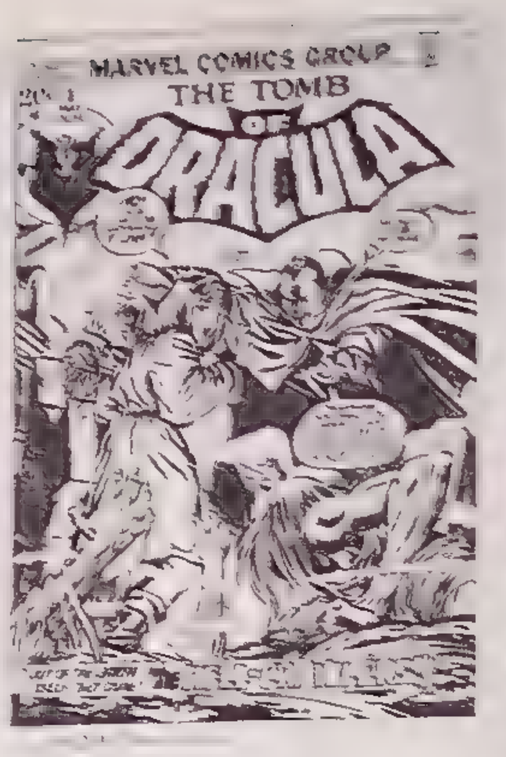
George Alec Effinger (or 'Piglet' if you will) is scripting 'Thongor' for the pages of *Creatures On The Loose*. Val Mayerik, who handles the art chores on 'Thongor,' impressed creator Lin Carter with his visual interpretation of the character.

Don Heck will remain as artist on *The Avengers*, while Richard Buckler takes over *Daredevil* from the busy Gene Colan. Daredevil, by the way, will have a two-part cross-over adventure with the Avengers to celebrate DD's 100th issue. The end result finds Black Widow deserting Daredevil and joining the Avengers.

In other staff news, Gil Kane remains as permanent artist on both *Spiderman* and the Spiderman *Team-Up* book, as well as doing covers for a good many titles. Dave Cockrum will be inking *Captain Marvel*, while Marvin Wolfman has been assigned work on *Spoof*. A new inking team of Frank Giacoia, Mike Esposito and Dave Hunt has been doing quite a bit of work for both companies under a sort of shop system.


MARVEL COMICS GROUP
CONAN
THE FALL OF THE TOWERS

MARVEL COMICS GROUP
THE INVINCIBLE
IRON MAN
DOUBLE-DEATH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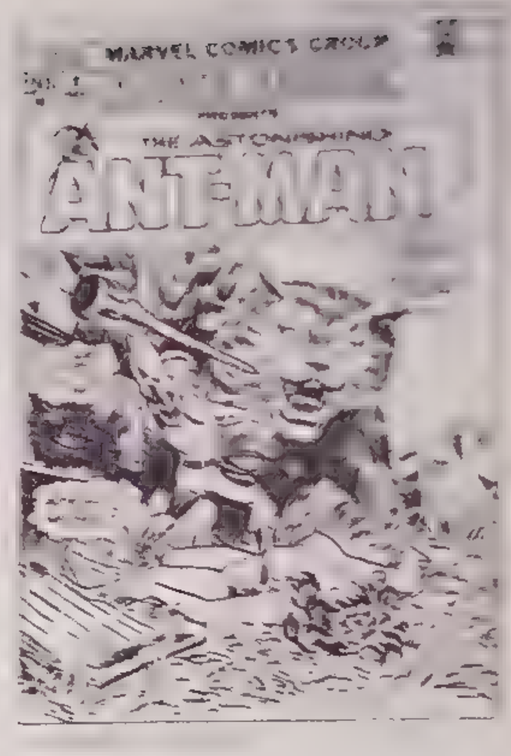
THE TOMB OF DRACULA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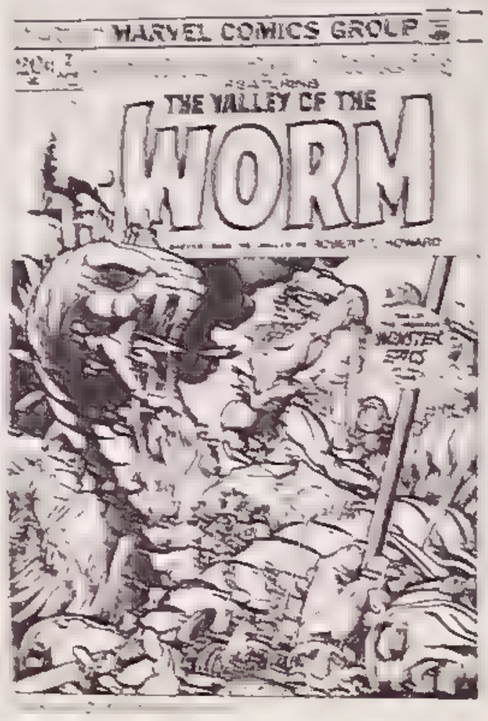
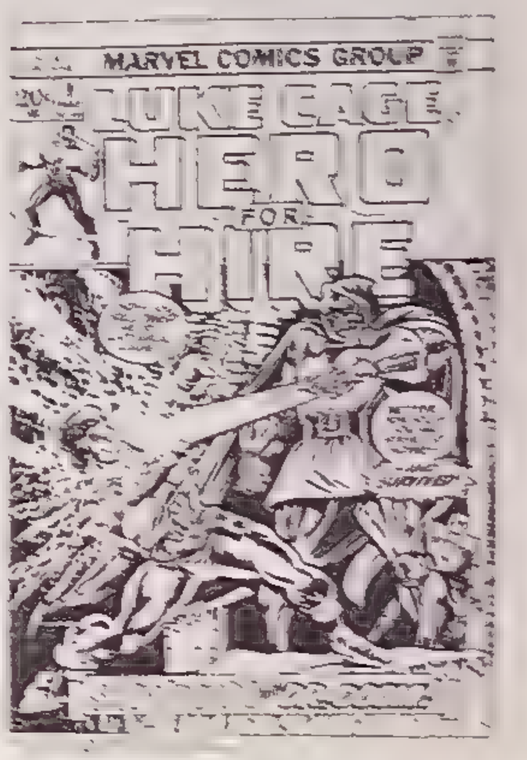
THE ASTONISHING
ANT-MAN

MARVEL COMICS GROUP
JOURNEY INTO
MYSTERY

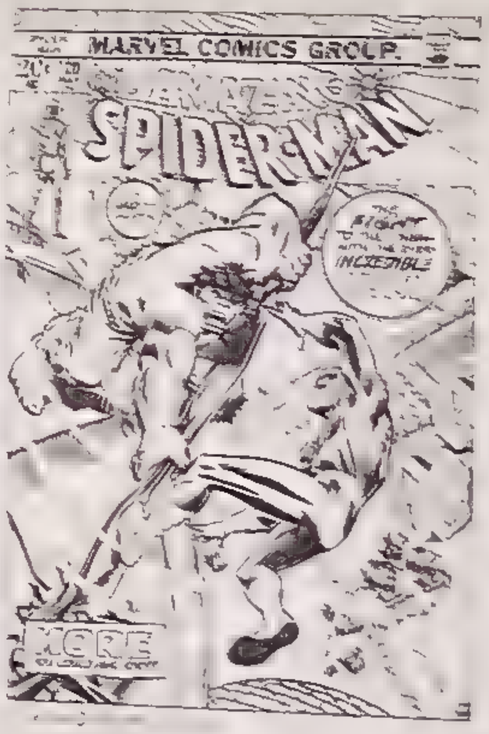
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
FANTASTIC FOUR


MARVEL COMICS GROUP
THE VALLEY OF THE
WORM

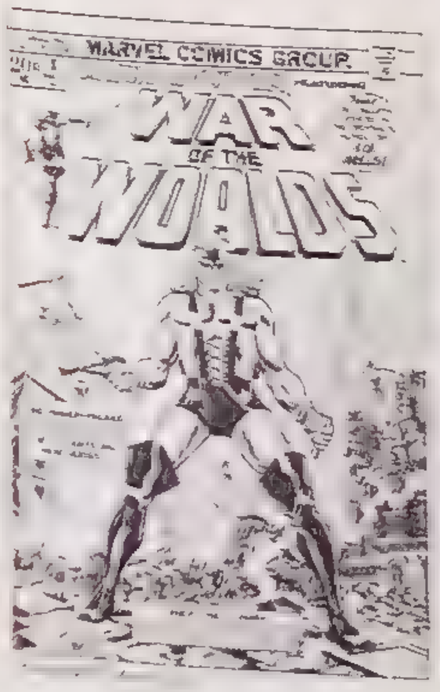

MARVEL COMICS GROUP
LUKE CAGE
HERO FOR HIRE

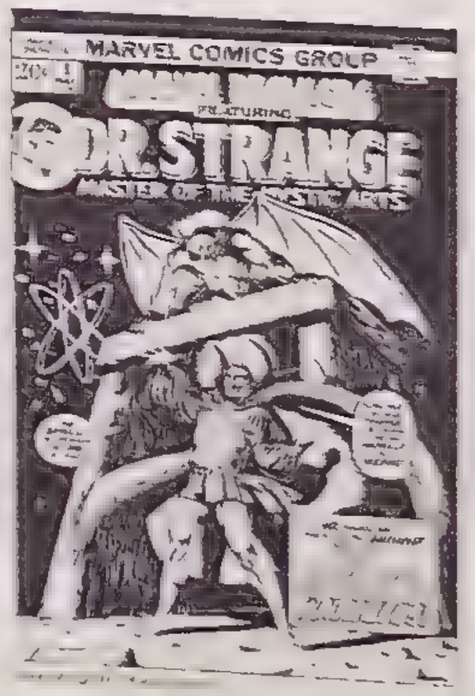
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
MARVEL SPOTLIGHT ON...
GHOST RIDER

MARVEL COMICS GROUP
VAULT OF EVIL

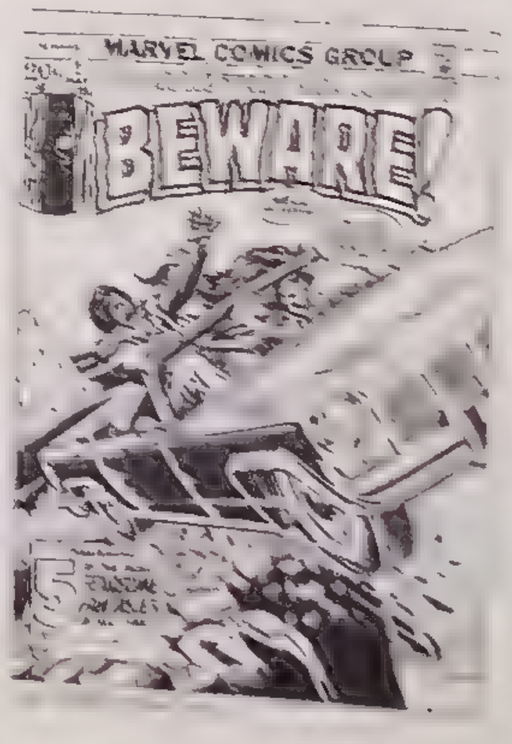

MARVEL COMICS GROUP
SPIDER-MAN

MARVEL COMICS GROUP
THE MONSTER OF FRANKENSTEIN


MARVEL COMICS GROUP
WAR OF THE WORLDS


MARVEL COMICS GROUP
DR. STRANGE

MARVEL COMICS GROUP
THE MIGHTY THOR


MARVEL COMICS GROUP
BEWARE!

The above cover is typical of illustrator John Newton Howett's dynamic approach to The Spider series

He fought crime because one near and dear to him was threatened by the underworld. No one knows his true identity though many think that his alter-ego is that of a rich playboy. He haunts the night hours and his very appearance is enough to strike terror in the hearts of the most hardened criminals. His name is a whispered curse in gangland dens from coast to coast. From time to time, he dons the disguise of a crook himself to learn secrets of the underworld.

He is a master of disguise. His loyal butler knows his secret and oftentimes he is aided by a huge dog. A silk rope is one of his many weapons, and he uses it often to swing from building to building. He is on close personal terms with the Commissioner of Police. Sound familiar? Nearly every comic character borrowed something from this masked avenger of crime. Few people who have read his many adventures have ever forgotten the sheer excitement and breathtaking action that filled every page of his magazine.

He is the Spider, Master of Men.

Batman took his name from a creature of the night, to prey on the superstitious nature of criminals. The Spider used that same fear in his symbol, a deadly tarantula. Unlike the Batman, the Spider believed in making sure that all criminals feared him for real as well as supernatural reasons. When the Spider killed a man, he left a red stamp in acid on the victim's forehead. An acid stamp in the shape of a spider!

Richard Wentworth was the real identity of the Spider, who starred in his own magazine for 118 issues, from Oct. 1933 to Dec. 1933. The Spider was written, with a few exceptions, by Norvell Page, an ex-newspaper man and veteran of the pulps. Page was a skilled craftsman and an exponent of fast-action over detailed logic. The Spider novels move like no other pulp writing.

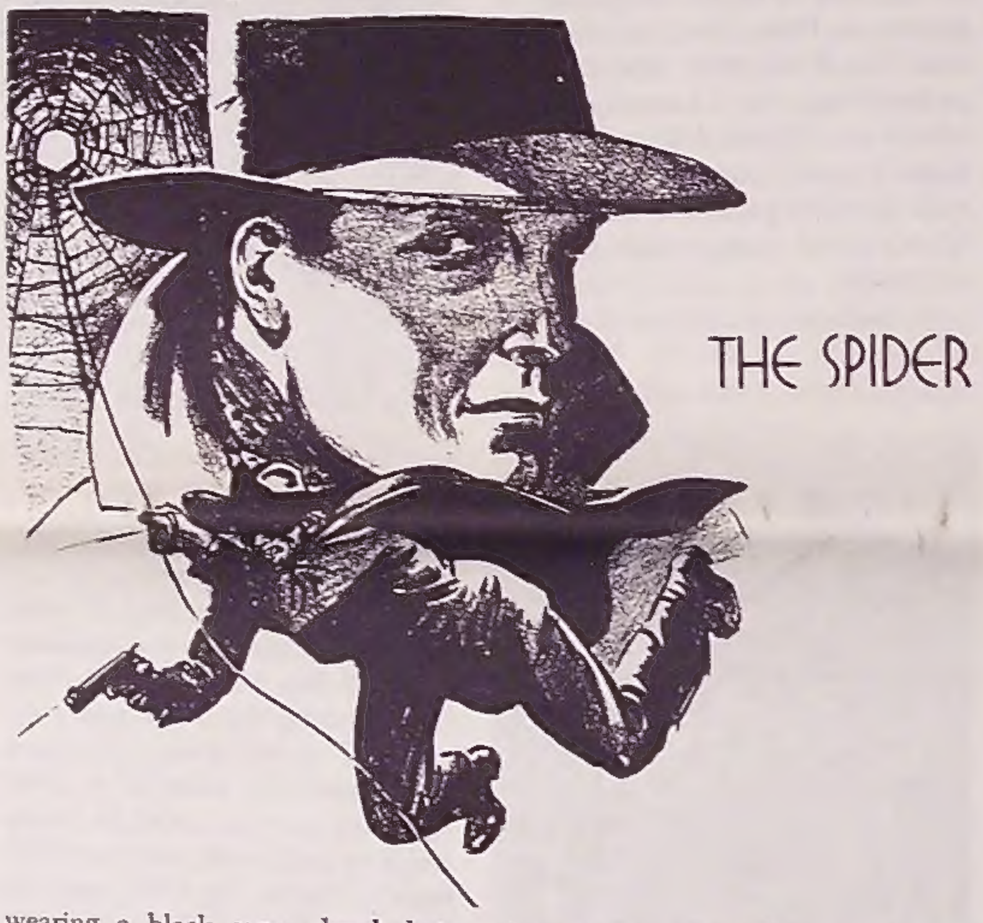
Often, one would realize afterwards that the basic premise of the novel was totally impossible or completely foolish. But, during the story, the reader is completely unaware of such faults in logic. Reading a Spider novel is like grabbing hold of a tiger tail. Once you start, you can't let go. The Spider was the most popular magazine brought out by Popular Publications and was only rivalled by Doc Savage and the Shadow in popularity in the entire character field.

Wentworth first became the Spider to help an old friend, Professor Brownlee, who was being threatened by a gang of hoodlums. It was Brownlee who suggested that Wentworth become a masked avenger of crime.

At the same time, Wentworth, a wealthy young man himself, dabbled in criminology, a somewhat different image than the fopish playboy alter-egos of the comics. Wentworth was quite a fine investigator in his normal life and was fast friends with Stanley Kirkpatrick, the Commissioner of Police in New York City where all of the action took place. Kirk was quite close with Wentworth. However, he had sworn to capture the Spider, who, though he fought crime, was outside the law in being both judge and executioner. Kirkpatrick suspected but was never able to prove his best friend was also the man he was dedicated to capturing.

Wentworth was engaged to Nita van Sloan, a wealthy young socialite. Nita knew of Wentworth's guise as the Spider and often helped him in his grim business. Jackson was Wentworth's aide and had served the Spider during World War I. Ram Singh, a huge Sikh, also worked for Wentworth. The Sikh was totally devoted to Wentworth since the day many years before that the man had saved Ram Singh's family from death. These two men also knew of the true identity of the Spider and helped Wentworth in his battles.

In the first few Spider novels, Wentworth usually wore a disguise or a mask in fighting criminals. In the story "Serpents of Destruction", Wentworth used a pair of wax fangs and gruesome makeup to disguise himself. Such a costume proved frightening to criminals. Within a few novels, the Spider was always



wearing a black cape, slouch hat, and the frightful fangs. His face distorted by makeup, his voice a low whisper of death, the Spider was a figure of terror to the underworld.

Wentworth was easily the best shot in the pulps. He rarely if ever missed. With his two .45 automatics, he could stand off an army of thugs. He was also a master of unarmed combat as well as a knife expert.

To learn secrets of criminal groups, Wentworth often disguised himself as Blinky McQuade, a nearsighted safecracker, well known in underworld haunts. Blinky was Wentworth's most frequent disguise, but the Spider was a master of deception and he used his talent to its fullest in escaping time after time from impossible-to-escape police traps.

Unlike other pulp heroes, Wentworth was an emotional man. Many times, he grew angry when Nita was threatened. He worried, though rarely about himself. His romance with Nita was probably the most believable of all such attachments in the character pulp magazine. The Spider fought crime out of hatred not out of joy of combat. Unlike Doc Savage, the Spider did not long for adventure. Instead, he wanted to settle down. But the evil forces of gangdom were always forcing him to defend the ordinary man from the dreadnaught of crime.

Another thing that set the Spider series apart from most other pulp adventures was that the novels were interrelated. Events from one novel were often referred to in later advenutres. In one story, Jackson is killed. For the next few novels, Wentworth is without his trusty aide and several times has painful memories of the man. In a later story, Jackson returns, the explanation being he was only badly wounded and during recovery kept his escape unknown to Wentworth. In numerous adventures, Wentworth, Nita, Kirkpatrick, Ram Singh, or Jackson are badly wounded. Wentworth sustained enough injuries to kill a dozen men but he fought on.

The Spider is called the Master of Men. This is because of the indomitable will of the Spider. No other character is pulp fiction could ever match Wentworth in sheer spirit and unquenchable desire to succeed. In adventure after adventure, the Spider is down, doomed and defeated. Yet, he never gives up. His unbreakable will has him fight on when all others might quit. The force of the Spider's will was like a living thing that enabled him to defeat the most monstrous of criminals.

The villains in the Spider were like no others in the pulps. Norvell Page was an inventive genius in the field of fiendish killers and destructive devices. The criminals and their inventions seem silly when studied but during the novel they were the masters of evil. In "The City Destroyer", Wentworth fights a criminal who has a chemical that destroys the supports of buildings. In that novel the Empire State building is destroyed, killing thousands. In "The Slaves of Hell", the Spider is matched up against a mad extortionist who dynamites Madison Square Garden during a championship boxing match. "Dragon Lord of the Underworld" featured a Chinese Mandarin who used poisonous lizards and snakes to enforce his reign of terror. Even more diabolical was the Red Mandarin, who in "The Red Death Reign" used a devilish chemical which multiplied the effects of nicotine in cigraettes to kill innocent people.

One of the most bizarre criminals that the Spider ever faced, and one of the most unusual criminals ever featured in the pulps was the Bat Man, who was the villain in the novel "Death Reign of the Vampire King". The Bat Man was a scientist who had brought back a large number of vampire bats from South America and raised huge hordes of the monsters in caverns in the southwest. He then coated their fangs with deadly poison making even the smallest bite fatal. The Bat Man wore a costume of a giant bat that acted like a glider and he controlled his bats by flying in front of them and giving commands by use of a supersonic whistle.

In cold print, the ideas seem ludicrous, but when the hordes of vampire bats descend on a city in the novel, the reader is caught up in one of the most gripping battles ever recorded in the pulps. In one scene, Wentworth and Jackson are stripped by the followers of the Bat Man and thrown into a cage with hundreds of hungry vampire bats. The climax of the novel has the Spider fighting the villain, both using man-sized gliders, in mid-air over Grand Canyon.

Logic was on vacation in the novel "Death and the Spider", the hundredth Spider novel. In that adventure, Wentworth fights a spectral figure who kills men for no reason, using for his weapon a scythe. The killer is a cowled skeleton and is impervious to bullets. In the end, it is all explained with a somewhat mundane speech about hynosis and mass hysteria, but the novel itself is a masterpiece of weird adventure as the Spider tries to defeat a foe who cannot be killed.

Giant Neanderthal men are the monsters in "Hordes of the Red Butcher." An army of lepers attack in "Volunteer Corpse Brigade." A fanatic cult of thuggees try to gain control of the government in "Machine Guns Over the White House." Each novel was unique in both its menace and the villain. Even the titles were masterpieces of pulp description. The reader was intrigued by such names as "Claws of the Golden Dragon", "Rule of the Monster Men", "Master of the Night Demons", "Overlord of the Damned", and the gruesome "The City that Dared Not Eat."

Cover artwork, by John Newton Howett and later by Raphael DeSoto, was among the best ever used for character pulps. The interior illustrations were also extremely well done, with a full-page picture of Wentworth featured each month as well as several fine action scenes.

However, the appearance of the magazines and the titles of the novels did not sell the Spider for 118 issues. It was the character himself that was what made the magazine so popular. In all the pulp field, the Spider stood alone as . . . the Master of Men!

Robert Weinberg

THE KITCHEN SINK

Milwaukee's the home of beer, right? When you think of Milwaukee, you see a bunch of funny little Germans in short leather pants, swinging steins and belching a lot.

They all have this "healthy" fear of authority—they Follow Orders. They lead this humdrum existence, divided between church, home and factory. And when they cut loose, they swill lots of beer. After all, they brew it, don't they?

In most ways, you're right if this is what you think. They might not wear leather shorts out in public anymore, but Beertown's good citizens still believe in an Established Way of Doing Things. And, by God, if you don't like it, leave.

Right in the middle of all this order is the irreverent chaos of the Krupp Comic Works. At this very moment—as you are reading this—huge trucks are highballing down America's turnpikes, spreading underground comix bearing the Kitchen Sink imprint wherever they go. Not even small town America is immune any longer from the growing tentacles of Krupp. The Works is big and getting bigger.

Currently, there are 36 comic books for which Krupp is responsible. This translates into over one million copies. That's pretty small potatoes compared with the million straight firms like Marvel and DC dish up each month. But, when you consider that each underground comic sells for 50 cents, can't be sold in a lot of places, and doesn't have any kind of organized national distribution, the one million becomes a little larger.

When you also consider that four years ago, Krupp was nothing but a dream; that two years ago it was three titles; that one year ago it was on the verge of death, then that one million begins to take on impressive stature. In slightly more than one year, Krupp has risen from being peanuts to being second nationwide in the manufacture of underground comix.

Krupp was the creation of one person—Denis Kitchen. However, many attended the birth; and one person, Tyler Lantzy by name, rescued the company from death.

Kitchen graduated from the University of Wisconsin—Milwaukee (with a degree in journalism, of all things) in 1968. "I thought before I hit the pavement to look for a job, I'd try cartooning first." He did, and he hasn't left the field yet. The only prior experience Kitchen had was a twice-weekly strip in his college newspaper.

He decided to gamble and be an underground cartoonist. At this time, there were very few of this new-type comix out. R. Crumb had started the *Zap* line; Jay Lynch and others had started *Bijou*. The only ug comic Kitchen had ever seen at this time was *Bijou* 1. He made a deal with a roommate—if the roommate would sell ads for the book and sell copies, Kitchen would produce it. From this, *Mom's Homemade Comics* No. 1 was born—the eighth underground comic ever produced. Very primitive compared with his style today, *Mom's* was at least concrete evidence that Kitchen was serious about comix. Kitchen's style, even in these early days, was easy to recognize. His characters were very balloonlike, with swollen hands and fingers and round bodies. Even then, the fine detail work was evident, and the brushwork that would later be a trademark made its crude debut.

Mom's came out just in time for the Fourth of July in 1969. Kitchen was almost busted for attempting to sell the book on the street during Milwaukee's justly famed Fourth of July Circus Parade. He and the roommate, Bill Kauth, managed to sell about 4,000 books to Milwaukee's growing freek community on the East Side. Then Kauth took off for California with a box of the books, and dropped them off at Berkeley's Print Mint for distribution. The Print Mint sold the box (advertising the basically tame *Mom's* as *"Weird Milwaukee Cartoons"*), and printed 15,000. Along with the 4,000 printed in Milwaukee, *Mom's* 1 had a respectable first run of 19,000.

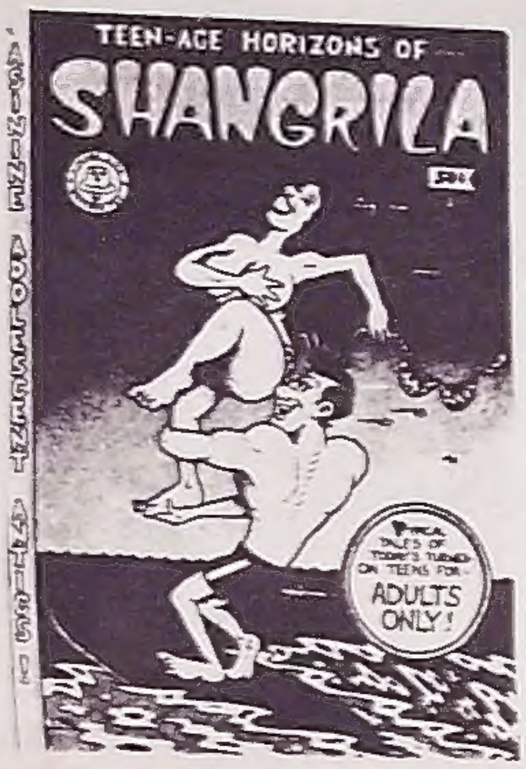
Immediately after *Mom's* 1, *Mom's* 2 began to see life. In this book, Kitchen's work was beginning to be-

come more refined. He has never taken an art course in his life, so Kitchen's work in comix has always involved a process of learning. He began by using 19¢ Bic pens, but was soon dissatisfied with the way they reproduce on newsprint. He switched to brush for parts of *Mom's* 1 and began using it exclusively in *Mom's* 2. He hasn't found anything better since for the super-fine detail he likes to indulge in. The process of learning was slow, but you can notice a world of difference between *Mom's* 1 and *Mom's* 2; and another world of difference between *Mom's* 2 and what followed. Kitchen had his basic style down in college; everything since that time has been refinement.

Mom's 2 also carried the work of two other artists, both of whom produced some mighty forgettable stuff.

After *Mom's* 2 came out, it was shipped to the Print Mint on the West Coast again. They claim they printed 10,000 and had a hard time getting rid of them, but Kitchen said he began feeling uneasy about the whole thing of dealing with a publisher 2,000 miles away. So were other Midwestern artists—notably Jay Lynch and Skip Williamson, the guiding lights of *Bijou*.

So, in the Spring of 1970, Kumquat Productions was born. It consisted of Kitchen and financial support in the form of Gene Gessert and V. Frederick Nast III. Kumquat's first book was *Teenage Horizons of Shangri-La* 1. It featured the work of Kitchen, Lynch, Justin Green and Daniel Clyne. Clyne's story—Hungry Chuck Biscuits—dealt with a 50's-type high school refugee bothered by intestinal worms, and so turned off Nast III that he pulled all support out of the company. Hungry Chuck



was pretty strong stuff for those times in the Midwest—some called the story the epitome of bad taste—*but the character and the story are regarded as classics today.*

Shangri-La also featured the work of two Milwaukee artists, Don Glassford and Jim Mitchell. With these two, Kitchen started an artist's cooperative in Milwaukee. The three would make all editorial decisions regarding what to print in comix, and how to generally scrape enough money together to both keep the company going and themselves keep from starving.

"The idea we had for the cooperative was a disaster from the start," Kitchen said. "We all had different aesthetic judgments about our own material and about material submitted to us. None of us was particularly into the business end of it, so we were careless, to say the least. We just floundered around discussing things we were going to do and getting little, if anything, done. It sounded good—all these artists working together to make something—but it just didn't work."

Around this time, the *Bugle-American* started. Begun as an alternative newspaper to what existed in Wisconsin at the time, the *Bugle* started printing in Madison, about 75 miles from Milwaukee. The paper wasn't straight and it wasn't underground, it was just an alternative to everything else. Kitchen was one of the founders, and was the *Bugle's* art director for nine months. It became the first paper to feature strips by five underground cartoonists on a regular basis. Each week, the *Bugle* deadline demanded and got five top quality ug strips, featuring the work of Kitchen, Glassford, Mitchell, Bruce Walthers and Wendel Pugh.

"The *Bugle* era was definitely good for Milwaukee cartoonists," Kitchen says. "While we didn't get a dime for any of the strips (the paper was in a continual financial bind) the discipline it demanded of us was just what we needed at the time. We started competing among ourselves for gags, technical excellence, evreything that goes into a strip.

"We all started getting better and better—you could actually notice it from week to week. We all refined our styles because we all didn't want to look bad compared with each other. I think Walther's work on Oscar Kabibbler showed the most noticeable improvement. In my opinion, Walthers strip showed flashes of genius—it still does."

As art director, Kitchen also worked on making the *Bugle* look "better than any other ug or alternate media paper on the street." Many think he succeeded—the *Bugles* from this time certainly had some of the best graphics of any paper, straight or underground.

In September of 1970, Kitchen, Glassford and Mitchell decided to change their corporate name from Kumquat to Krupp. They all favored Krupp. Kitchen says, because of its Germanic sound and because it was a take off on the infamous Krupp Works in Germany, which had supplied that country with all its guns,

ammunition and armament in both the first and second world wars. Changing the Krupp image from cannons to cartoons can only be for the good. Krupp also sounds better than Kumquat, and much better than another name that was being kicked around at the time—Undulating Tentacles, Inc. They established two comic book divisions. The first, Kitchen Sink Enterprises, was to publish the "safer" titles, which could be sold to more outlets. Another division, Clean Gene Comics, was to have published the "dirty" titles. However, Glassford's dog chewed up the art for the Clean Gene imprint and it was decided to use Kitchen Sink as the sole trademark, although the design changes with practically every comic book.

In the fall and winter of 1970, Krupp's first big break came. Tired of hassling with a West Coast pub-

lisher, Lynch transferred *Bijou* to Krupp. Beginning with *Bijou* 5, Lynch would print with Krupp. The second break came when Robert Crumb decided to let Krupp print his *Homegrown Funnies*. With Crumb and Lynch in the Krupp line, other publishers had to acknowledge that Krupp was going to be heard from more and more. The voice from Milwaukee was growing stronger.

Around this time, Glassford came out with *Deep 3-D*, the first three-dimensional comic in years, and the first underground 3-D. Glassford did up to 15 layers in parts of *Deep 3-D*, which took a summer to produce. Mitchell added to the line with *Smile* 1, a popular but shallow comic.

Just as Krupp seemed to be getting off the ground, the three-part "team" began to split up. Glassford and Mitchell started to become involved in other things, Pugh and Walthers moved away, and Kitchen was left with distributing and publishing, editing, handling the Krupp books and doing his own work. He began to be snowed under by a mass of business—something he was totally unprepared for, and in September of 1971, Krupp was near death.

Enter Tyler Lantzy, a 23-year-old graduate of Notre Dame. Lantzy was in Milwaukee to check out a script he had sent Krupp. Through talking with Kitchen and the others, he soon found out that Krupp was in deep trouble and was sorely in need of a business manager. He offered his services at $50 a week, and was

hired. The first thing he had to do was straighten out the books, catch up on some of the bills, and rejuvenate the distribution, which had grown into a hit or miss proposition.

He took over the business side of the company, and Kitchen concentrated on the creative side, and Krupp began to get healthier. Mail orders—even small ones—were mailed out the same day they were received. New channels of distribution were found. All the hassles on the business side went through Lantzy.

In the spring of 1972, Kitchen finally started devoting all of his time to Krupp. Before this time, he had to freelance just to pay the rent and buy food. For the first time, he was put on salary by Krupp.

And the titles started pouring out like rain. From a total of 18 books at the beginning of the year, the Krupp line has mushroomed to 36. Krupp has been experiencing a tremendous rise in sales in the past few months, to the point where the company is now shipping between 90,000 and 100,000 books a month now.

Getting away from mere figures, the most exciting thing about Krupp is what's happening now. For instance, in May of this year, R. Crumb, Robert Armstrong and Allan Dodge journeyed to Beertown and recorded some tapes at a local studio. The tapes became the first 78 RPM record released in the past 20 years. Crumb himself takes the lead vocal on a 20's suicide tune called "River Blues." He sings in a modified crooner style, and is surprisingly good. Dodge and Armstrong back him up on mandolin and steel guitar. The flip side is a rickey-tickey little

tune called "Wisconsin Wiggles." It sounds very 30's-ish, and is derived from the white string bands of that era. Actually, the best way to describe it is so say it sounds like the soundtrack of a 30's cartoon. In fact, it may become a cartoon. Readers of this mag know that animated cartoon quality has gone downhill in the past 10-15 years. The crap they serve you when you go to the movies is almost unbelievably bad—everything is done fast and sloppily, with no care taken with anything. Krupp hopes to start changing that with their own animated version of "Wisconsin Wiggles." They hope to show a band and a floorful of dancers, all workin' out to the tune. Various underground cartoonists would take separate members of the band, or a pair of dancers, and show their movements throughout. The backgrounds will be detailed, and care will be taken to render the whole thing in the style of a 30's cartoon. It will be in black and white (which is more authentic and also cheaper to do.)

If the first release of the 78's are successful, more will be coming from Crumb and his crew. The next projected release from the three is "Beach at Waikiki" and "Kiwi Bump."

Another thing Krupp is up to is the re-emergence of Will Eisner and The Spirit of the comix scene. Eisner's Spirit last appeared nationally in 1952. For a forthcoming issue of *Snarf*—on the stands now—Eisner did his first original Spirit since that time. Krupp is also working with Eisner on reprinting his old stories, and is also working on another project which must remain secret at this time. Watch for it sometime next year.

Kitchen is particularly proud of the *Snarf* series. He has a cover from Harvey Kurtzman which is scheduled for *Snarf* 5. Kitchen envisions *Snarf* as a general underground humor magazine, with quality covers and stories from both the established underground cartoonists (Crumb, Lynch, Kitchen), new talent (Pete Poplaski and Peter Loft) and the old-time straight cartoonists like Eisner and Kurtzman. Other "old pros" will appear in future issues.

Also on the drawing boards is a new magazine—not comic book—called *Inside Dirt*. The magazine is visualized as being a combination expose-gossip mag with the fearless motto: "Other magazines feed you candy pills—We give you the real dope." The magazine should be out sometime early next year, and will contain stories based in fact. It will be magazine size with a glossy cover and pulp insides.

Coming out in the near future are *Shangri-La* 3, *Bizarre Sex* 3 and *Death Rattle* 2. These three books are continuations of what could be excellent lines. *Underground Comix* 1 will make its debut about this time, with stories dealing with a true underground. Insects in their burrows and humans in the sewers sort of set the tone for the stories in this book.

Another special project, being edited by Art Spiegelman, is a pulp

magazine called *Spicy Slime Adventure Stories*. It will contain stories and illustrations in the style of the classic pulps and appear in identical format.

Kitchen and Krupp also plan to produce a trading card series in the format of bubblegum baseball cards. Only these cards will feature famous underground comix characters, personalities, and scenes; probably 100 cards in all. Also planned is a series featuring old blues players, giving their histories, the music they were noted for, and how they died (which is almost universally violent.) Also near production is an erotic puzzle. The erotic game/puzzle was originally released in a limited edition in Holland and France. Created by Willem Holtrop, the puzzle is one in which numerous combinations can be made to illustrate weird erotic fantasies. The puzzle is limited to the fantasies that Holtrop chose for it, but it still has enough variety to appeal to all kinds of weirdos.

Kitchen—in light of the spectacular strides Krupp has made lately—is naturally optimistic about the firm's future. He feels there is more of a future in the underground than there is in straight comics.

In many cases this is true. The straight line—no matter what Stan Lee says—is suffering from hardening of the arteries. There are many titles being released by the straights, but the quality of many books seem to be going down. The new titles—with some exceptions—are all sounding too familiar to last very long. Marvel and DC are engaging in some social commentary, but in many cases, the voices are too cautious, too timid, too afraid to offend. The straights are faced with the problem of dealing with a mass audience, so they try not to offend any segment of readers too much.

Newer artists are also not satisfied to become timid hack men for one of the big assembly line comic firms. They want to express what they're feeling, what they think, and they really don't want an older editor or manager telling them what to do and not do. The underground firms, on the other hand, don't censor anything. An artist can feel basically free to do anything he wants. This sometimes makes for some pretty weird stuff, but the audience is weird too, so there's a market for most any kind of expression. The undergrounds offer the artist a freedom he just can't get anywhere else, and the younger, more talented artists appreciate that fact.

Many established artists are probably afraid to take the plunge into undergrounds because they feel the "hip" companies don't pay too well. This isn't necessarily true anymore. Krupp, for example, pays artists $30 a page for a 20,000 run of comix. The artist gets another $30 for a second run of 20,000; another $30 for another run, and so on. Some of the more popular artists get up to $150 a page. The straight comix pay artists a flat rate from $35 to $60 a page, and the company keeps the rights to the artwork. Most ug firms take only the first rights (and the right to reprint in the same book), and give all other rights back to the artist.

Thus it is that all the advantages to the artist lie with the underground firms. In fact, Kitchen says "the only thing the straight comics have on any of us right now is money and distribution. We still don't have the nationwide distribution into drug stores and other places they do, and we don't have all their ready cash. But we have the talent, the ideas, the real future in comix. If there isn't a major co-optation somewhere along the line, I can foresee the day when the undergrounds will be bigger than the straights. Of course, then we won't be underground anymore."

Time will tell if the undergrounds become a major economic and artistic force in America. There are definite positive signs already, but most of the firms—including Krupp—have a long way to go before even approaching the size of some of the straight comics.

Who knows? Maybe sometime in the not-too-distant future, Milwaukee will be known for more than beer.

Dave Schreiner

SHAZAM! CAPTAIN MARVEL RETURNS

For almost 20 years he had been gone, vanished into that vast super hero hiatus that had claimed so many Golden Age characters. Suddenly, like a bolt of lightning, he was back to work his magic on the comic readers of the 70's. National Periodicals broke the news of CAPTAIN MARVEL's return in mid-1972 and set the comic world talking with the news. Several artists were considered for the strip but, after being persuaded by fans, National contacted CAPTAIN MARVEL's original illustrator, C. C. Beck. Always in top form, Beck sent in his acceptance in the form of a gag panel which COMIXSCENE reproduces here for the first time for its readers.

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